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# THE LIFE OF
# ANDREW MARTIN FAIRBAIRN

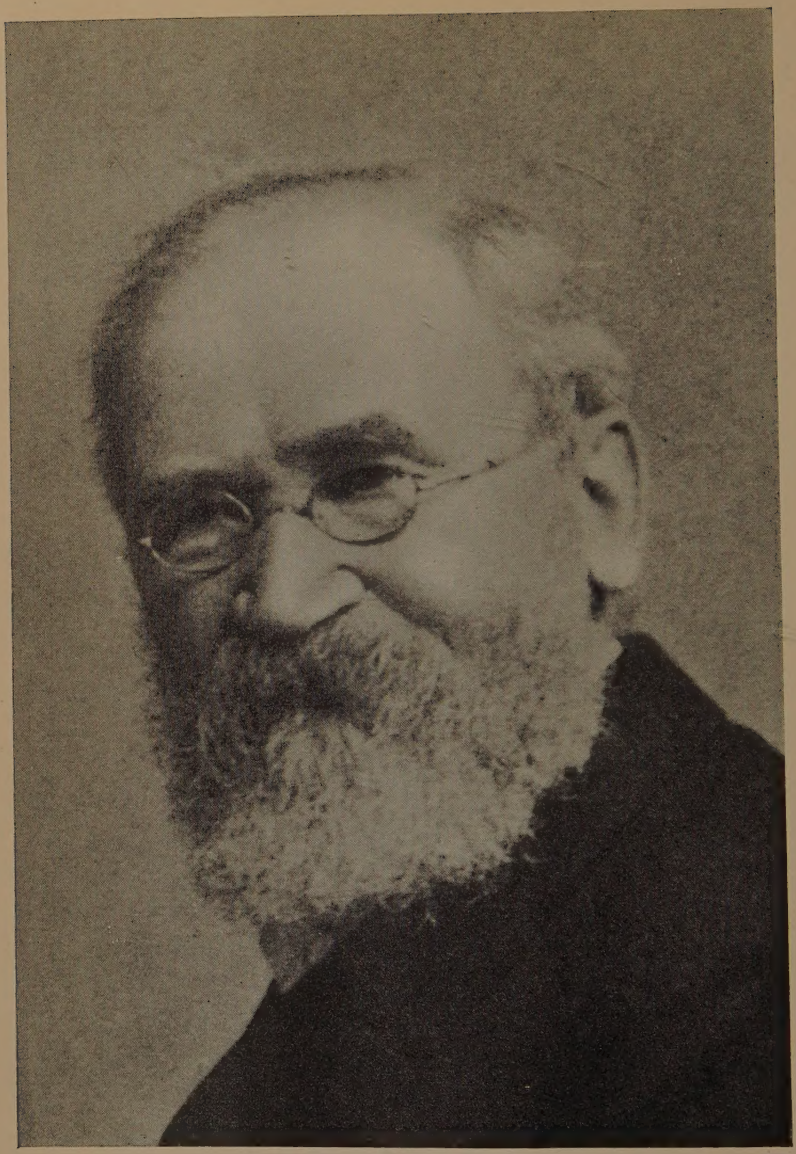

*Photo: Elliot & Fry*

Sincerely yours
A. M. Fairbairn

# THE LIFE OF ANDREW MARTIN FAIRBAIRN

D.D., D.LITT., LL.D., F.B.A., ETC.

FIRST PRINCIPAL OF MANSFIELD COLLEGE, OXFORD

*By* W. B. SELBIE

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*Deus locutus est nobis in Filio.*

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*Da quod jubes et jube quod vis.*

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*In lumine Tuo videbimus Lumen.*

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# PREFACE

THE writing of this book has been a labour of love. When it was first suggested to me I shrank from the task as one altogether beyond my powers. But I was impelled to undertake it in the end, not only by the wishes of Dr. Fairbairn's family, but by a deep sense of loyalty to one who was to me, as to so many others, both a master and a friend. This, however, has only increased the difficulty of the work. It is never easy to write about those we have admired and loved. The desire to avoid partiality often leads to the other extreme, and I am conscious that my attempts at appreciation may sometimes seem to err on the side of caution. I have tried to present a true portrait, and I may say that, in the effort to do so, I have come to appreciate far more deeply than I did before, not only the great intellectual capacity of the man, but also the essential nobility and simple beauty of his character and life.

I have to thank the members of Dr. Fairbairn's family for giving me free access to all his papers. These consisted mainly of letters and notebooks. He kept no diary save for a week or two here and there, and there are long gaps in the correspondence at some of the most interesting stages in his career. It has not been possible, therefore, to write with any minuteness of chronological detail, and the result is an impression, or series of impressions, rather

than a chronicle of events. If the theological element seems to predominate, that is only because it was the dominant interest of Dr. Fairbairn's life. It is too soon, as yet, to estimate at its true value the work he did in Theology, and especially for theological education. This latter was always very near his heart, and time will only enhance our sense of its worth.

I have also to thank the many friends who have helped me and whose names appear in due course in these pages. But I owe a special debt of gratitude to my colleagues, Dr. Vernon Bartlet, Dr. Buchanan Gray, and Mr. Norman Smith, for their kindness in reading the MS. and for many valuable suggestions.

W. B. SELBIE

MANSFIELD COLLEGE
1914

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# CHAPTER I

## BOYHOOD AND STUDENT DAYS

ANDREW MARTIN FAIRBAIRN was born at Inverkeithing in Fife on November 4, 1838. His ancestry, in which he took no small pride, was one that well became the future theologian and preacher. On his mother's side he was connected with the Covenanters, her family tracing its descent from the farmer of Bluecairn in Lauderdale in whose house Richard Cameron found a hiding-place during the troubles. Having been baptized in secret by Cameron, the whole family afterwards became Seceders[1] of the staunch anti-Burgher type. To these Fairbairn's grandmother belonged all her life, though her husband was an elder in a Burgher kirk. It is said that neither of them was ever seen in church in the other's company; but their grandson testified that their religious differences were never allowed to mar the peace of the home or to disturb the respect and affection in which they were held by their children. The maternal grandfather, Andrew

[1] The Seceders were the first Free Churchmen in Scotland. They separated from the Establishment in 1733 under Ebenezer Erskine on the question of Lay Patronage. In 1747 controversy arose as to taking the oath administered to burgesses in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Perth, in which a reference to "the true religion presently professed within this realm" was variously interpreted as alluding either to the Established Church or merely to the Protestant Faith. Controversy on the point led to the further division of the Church into Burghers and anti-Burghers. These two continued side by side till another division was caused on the question of the power of the civil magistrate (Auld Licht controversy), and a minority broke off from each under the designation "original." But in 1820 all came together again and formed the United Secession Church, which continued till 1847, when it became part of the United Presbyterian Church. It was from the United Secession Church that James Morison was expelled in the controversy on the Atonement, 1840–5.

Martin,[1] was a "portioner," or small laird, of Blainslie, near Lauder. He was a man of integrity and independence, suspected and kept under observation by the Government of the day because of his supposed sympathy with the French Revolution. On the other side the grandfather, James Fairbairn, was a farmer in Lauderdale, where Fairbairns were numerous. He died while his son John was comparatively young. Andrew was the second son in a family of seven children born to this John Fairbairn and Helen Martin his wife. His father was a miller and a typical Scotchman of his class, a man of grit and conscience, with a mind to work and a deeply religious nature. Both parents belonged to the United Secession Church, though the father's traditions were with the evangelical section of the Establishment. The two families had in the course of only two generations given twelve ministers to the Presbyterian pulpit.

To his mother Fairbairn owed a very deep debt. She was a stronger character than her husband, and in every way a remarkable woman. She handed on to her son something of the shrewdness, self-confidence and independence of spirit which she had herself inherited. She lived to a ripe old age, and it was from her that Fairbairn derived his pride in his Scottish birth and his knowledge of the history and minstrelsy of the Border. Writing once on J. M. Barrie's *Margaret Ogilvy*, he said that "he could

[1] Of his maternal grandfather Fairbairn wrote thus in 1894:

"I can remember an old servant of my grandfather explaining his mode of catechising. At the function his wife and children, the servants, and even the stranger within his gates, were assembled, and all were catechised or invited to take some part in the exercises. He had a specially vivid recollection of some occasional visitor who wished to be coached secretly beforehand in the selected part of the Catechism, as he had grown somewhat rusty. Yet religion was as much a matter of conduct as of thought; and there are traditions of how he had even reproved the minister who had lingered over his cups longer than was seemly. Nor did he fail to look at all questions, even though they affected his own profits, through the public good; and he scorned, though pressed by a great lord, to ask that his land should be enhanced in value by taxes on the food of the people."

hardly read it because of another and to him grander and sweeter figure that stood between him and the printed page—one who had seemed to her son all and more than all Barrie said his mother had been to him, who had given him eyes and ears, touched his imagination, made him see the pathos and humour of life, interpreted her old world for him (and it never was a prosaic or unromantic world), and who had breathed into him her own love of the heroic and holy, of freedom and honest truth."

Soon after Andrew's birth John Fairbairn removed with his family to Dalkeith, where he followed his calling as a miller and lived in one of the cottages connected with the mill in which he worked. The family attended the anti-Burgher church in the Back Street Meeting House under the ministry of the Rev. Robert Buchanan. He was a kindly but stern old man, a careful pastor, whose visits, with their solemn catechising of the children, Fairbairn used to recall in later days as a model of what pastoral visitation should be. The church was a very small one but very select and very conservative, clinging to the metrical psalms as the only legitimate medium of praise, and scornful of the paraphrases as "man-made" hymns.

After a few years in Dalkeith the family removed to Edinburgh. Here Andrew, who was now six years old, and had begun his education in a dame school at Dalkeith, was sent to school with Mr. Oliphant in Rose Street, afterwards of Charlotte Square. Even then the school had a high reputation, and gave its pupils a thorough grounding in English, Latin, and arithmetic. But the boy was not destined to remain at school long. His father was poor and had suffered losses, so that the upbringing of the children was of the strictest, and the boys had to earn their own living at an early age. It would appear too that Andrew was not very diligent at school. He was fond of horses, and would be running after them when he should have been better employed. His mother used to

threaten that she would take him from school and put him to work if he did not mend his ways. In any case, before he was ten years old he became an errand boy in the shop of George Brydone & Co. in Edinburgh. A testimonial signed by the firm and dated November, 1849, runs: "Andrew Fairbairn has been in our employment for about two and a half years, and during that period has served us honestly. We part from him as we have no further use for his services." Another testimonial, undated, describes him as a "smart, active boy" and "now able to attend to a customer." He also served for a time in the shop of one Peter Henderson, North Bridge, Edinburgh, and later on he worked in Tod's flour mill at Leith, where his father was employed. He seems to have been apprenticed to the mason whose duty it was to keep the mill stones ground. When he went to college one of the things which the students noticed about him was that his hands were covered with purple spots caused by the flying chips of stone.

During the time between his leaving school, about 1847–8, and entering the University in 1857 Fairbairn carried on his own education, always assisted and encouraged by his mother. From Edinburgh itself he drank in all the inspiration which the splendid old city has to give. He came to know it thoroughly and to love the traditions and romances which gather round its sacred spots. Its book shops were an especial delight, and at a very early age the boy began to acquire his lifelong habit of omnivorous reading. Walter Scott especially was an education to him. Though his parents forbade novel reading, an exception was made in favour of Scott, who was regarded as more historian than novelist. His poetry Andrew learned off by heart almost instinctively and without being conscious that he was doing so. Many years later he spoke of these early days as follows:

"Into my boyhood's home the tale was seldom allowed to come, but Scott came. These were the stories of our

own borderland. I was nursed in them from Tweed right on to distant Edinburgh, and if I were blindfolded I could walk and tell you as I went every stream we crossed and every tale the stream can tell. These tales came into a home wherein tales were loved, and they gave knowledge and a taste for literature that in later days was to live and to flourish. I do not reproach Scott, but I do feel that he has not fairly represented his people, he has not understood John Knox. Nay, Knox stands infinitely above any platform Scott can occupy. He has not understood the Cameronian and Covenanter preachers. Their idealism, their range of imagination far transcended his. I do love to have the whole of my country made articulate, and I ask you to remember that if you would know what the people are, study the men whose passion and whose genius live in the poetry of Burns. They are men whose thought and whose temper live in the breast of Carlyle, but Scott saw not the meaning of it or failed to describe it. . . . It is no wonder we have a sense of the romance of our land, but it is not a romance expressed in knights and fair ladies, tournaments, and wandering Scots abroad. It is a romance expressed in heroic men who have missions only to be good, to do good."

In spite of the *res angusta domi* young Fairbairn soon began to get together the beginnings of a library. He loved to tell the story of his first purchase. Finding himself one day with fourpence in his pocket, saved up from the daily pennies given to him for his lunch, he strolled into an auction room. There Robertson's *History of Greece* was cried. He bid his fourpence, and as there was no other offer the book was knocked down to him. He kept it till the day of his death, and it became the beginning of his fine and carefully selected library. His mother viewed her son's propensity for general reading with no little concern. There was "no telling what the laddie might become if he read everything that fell in his way." But she had the good sense to direct rather than restrict him, and to trust to his own better instincts

and to the atmosphere of a godly home to keep him out of mischief.

It was during this period, when the boy was working hard by day and studying equally hard at night and in the early morning, that he first came under definite religious influence. His elder brother, who was in a situation in Dundee, had become connected with an Evangelical Union church in that town, attracted by a type of religion broader and more gracious than the Calvinism of the Secession churches. He seems to have influenced Andrew who, to the no small sorrow of his parents, joined the Evangelical Union church in Leith under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Boyle.[1] Shortly afterwards he announced his intention of becoming an Evangelical Union minister, and with the help of Mr. Boyle began to study Greek and in other ways to prepare himself for the work.

It was surely at the bidding of no light impulse that Fairbairn severed his connection with Presbyterianism and took the course which he was content to pursue for the rest of his days. There was, however, nothing singular or surprising about it, even though it meant casting in his lot with an obscure people whose position was one of great unpopularity and subject to much misunderstanding. At that time the Evangelical Union churches were well established, and presented very real attractions for the more earnest and thoughtful type of youth. They stood for a broader theology and a freer spirit than Presbyterianism. Their great leader, Dr. James Morison, was a man of winning personality and of real spiritual power. As a young minister of the United Secession church at Kilmarnock he had been suspended in 1841 for his views regarding faith, the operation of the Holy Spirit, and the extent of the Atonement, which he declared to be of universal efficacy. The United

[1] Mr. Boyle was in later years well known in London as minister of the Barbican Congregational Church.

Secession churches, though they stood for freedom in things ecclesiastical, had remained rigidly Calvinistic in their theology. Their standards were the Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, and they seemed to atone for their liberal polity by maintaining the doctrines then taught in their strictest form. But a new and milder spirit was beginning to make itself felt in the religion of the Scottish people. There was much searching of heart among the pious, and a real desire to escape from the bonds of Calvinism. Morison made his protest at a time when the way had been prepared for him, and his liberal and evangelical appeals fell on willing ears. His trial for heresy was carried on amid widespread excitement, and the discussion resulting from it, along with the pamphlets in which he set forth his views, caused his position to be well known and eagerly canvassed throughout the Presbyterian churches. His great acceptability as a preacher, the many conversions that came to him as seals to his ministry, and the fact that other ministers, including his own father, accepted and began to teach his views led Morison in 1843 to found a new religious body under the title of "Evangelical Union." [1] In the first instance this was not designed to be a new church, but rather a society for the promotion of evangelistic work. Its leaders used to declare that any Christian church or minister could join the Evangelical Union without breaking connection with the denomination to which they belonged. Circumstances, however, made this position more and more untenable, and the Evangelical Union in time became a separate denomination until it was absorbed into the Congregational Union of Scotland in the year 1896. When first established the Union was strictly voluntary, and had as its aims "mutual countenance, counsel, and co-operation in

[1] A very full account of the founding of the Evangelical Union will be found in Dr. Adamson's *Life of Principal Morison* (1898), and in the *History of the Evangelical Union* by F. Ferguson (1876).

supporting and teaching the glorious, simple, soul-saving and heart-sanctifying gospel of the grace of God." Its general theological position was a moderate Calvinism except that in regard to the Atonement it declared that "God, because of His infinite benevolence towards the whole world, and no doubt also for the purpose of benefiting the whole universe (Eph. iii. 10) by displaying the exceeding evil of sin, the immovable stability of His government, and the breadth and length and depth and height of His love, sent His Son, Jesus, into the world in the likeness of sinful flesh, and to be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world without distinction or exception." This position was popularly summed up in what were known as the "Three Universalities," viz. (1) The love of God the Father in the gift and sacrifice of Jesus to all men everywhere without distinction, exception, or respect of persons; (2) The love of God the Son in the gift and sacrifice of Himself as a true propitiation for the sins of the world; (3) The love of God the Holy Spirit in His present and continuous work of applying to the souls of all men the provisions of Divine Grace.

After the founding of the Union the new doctrine spread rapidly, and Evangelical Union churches were set up in many parts of Scotland. A Theological Academy for the training of ministers was opened in connection with Morison's church at Kilmarnock, and Morison himself was appointed one of its professors. But the movement was deeply resented in Presbyterianism, and for a long time Morisonians, as they were popularly called, were regarded as almost outside the pale and subjected to not a little social persecution. Of the Evangelical Union Sir W. Robertson Nicoll has written:[1]

"This remarkable body has never received full justice. It was born in a vehement reaction against an iron Calvinism, but its ministers and members were on other points intensely orthodox. At that time the common

[1] *British Weekly*, February 15, 1912.

people in Scotland were deeply interested in theological problems. Debates on Predestination were attended by crowded audiences. During the interval between the forenoon and the afternoon service there were many gatherings in humble homes where the time was occupied in examining the Scripture. Passage was compared with passage, the most abstruse subjects in theology were elaborately discussed, the minister's sermons were criticised, and if his statements were not thought satisfactory he would hear of it by one means or another. . . . The ministers of the Evangelical Union were, as a rule, men of popular gifts and on some subjects well in advance of their time. This was especially true of the great temperance movement which owed much to them. The ministers and members of the Union were not only abstainers but active advocates of total abstinence. . . . The Evangelical Union was honourably distinguished by its zeal in producing periodical literature. They managed to publish a weekly which lived for more than a generation and also a quarterly theological review called the *Evangelical Repository*, besides two monthly periodicals. In this they were far ahead of the Scottish Presbyterians, notwithstanding their numerical inferiority."

It was in such an atmosphere as this that Fairbairn began his religious life and work. Just how and when he determined to become a minister we shall see later. The step was taken before his nineteenth year, and when he reached that age in the summer of 1857 he joined the Evangelical Union Academy which, by that time, had removed with Morison to Glasgow and was housed in the buildings of the North Dundas Street Evangelical Union church. Shortly afterwards he began to attend classes at Edinburgh University, and carried on his work in the two institutions side by side. This was not so impossible an arrangement as it might seem in these days, and, to a student who took his work seriously, it meant a real saving of time, and was carried out at the express desire of the theological professors. The Edinburgh session lasted from the beginning of November to the following

spring, while the session in the Theological Academy occupied only the months of August and September. Fairbairn's course in Edinburgh does not seem to have been completed, probably through lack of funds, for he never proceeded to a degree. But he attended classes by Prof. Blackie on Greek Language and Literature, Prof. Alex. Fraser on Logic and Metaphysics, Prof. MacDougall on Moral Philosophy, Prof. Liston on Hebrew and Oriental Languages, and Prof. Lee on Biblical Criticism and Antiquities. In the Theological Academy he studied for four sessions under Profs. Morison, Guthrie, and Kirk, with one session under Rev. Fergus Ferguson. Fairbairn does not seem to have been in any way an exceptional student. The only prize he obtained was that in the Moral Philosophy class at the University. But all his professors testified to his diligence, regularity, and marked ability. No doubt the defects in his earlier education made matters very difficult for him and compelled him to devote much of his labour to making up for lost time. His fellow-students, however, were thoroughly aware of his powers, and noted especially his extraordinary memory and his rapid and complete grasp of any subject with which he might be dealing. A further hindrance to his work was caused by the necessity of preaching every Sunday, which was forced upon the students of the Academy by circumstances.[1] At this time the churches of the Evangelical Union were growing more rapidly than was the supply of men for their ministry, and every available student was required to preach and sometimes to take charge of pastorless churches for weeks together during the vacations. It was in this way that Fairbairn won his earliest pastoral experience.

Of his brief ministry at Fraserburgh in 1858 the present minister, Rev. J. W. Gillies, writes :

[1] In 1858, for example, he preached for seven Sundays at Auchtermuchty, four at Montrose, five at Fraserburgh, four at Dunfermline, five at Glasgow, besides taking occasional supplies at Bathgate and Leith.

"His ministry is still fresh in the memory of some leading men in the town. They testify to the evangelical fervour he exhibited when in the pulpit and to his intellectual activity. Even at this early stage he was a controversialist, and during his residence here a sharp discussion arose over the future condition of unbaptized infants. Fairbairn carried on the controversy with great vigour both in the pulpit and in the press. His evening lectures drew large crowds which filled the church. He assailed Calvinism fiercely and emphasised the three great universalities which became associated with the name of the Rev. James Morison. Another subject which he advocated with impetuous enthusiasm was total abstinence from intoxicating liquor, together with the use of unfermented wine in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."

The two professors who influenced Fairbairn most in his university course were John Stuart Blackie and James Morison, and with both of them he maintained a lifelong friendship. Blackie had held the Greek chair in Edinburgh for only a few years, but his vivid personality and genuine enthusiasm for his work had already given him a peculiar place in the affection and admiration of the students. Fairbairn used to say that if the professor did not teach them a great deal of Greek he did inspire them with a high ideal of scholarship and with something of his own passion for the language and literature of Hellas. At the same time he encouraged the men to read widely, and by his own early theological training and his knowledge of the theology of Germany helped to enlarge their outlook and kindle their ambitions. Fairbairn retained a great affection for this quaint and erratic genius. Blackie was one of the first of his old friends to visit him in Oxford, where his shepherd's plaid, big stick, and broad-brimmed hat created a mild sensation. Morison was, in his own way, equally remarkable, though a man of very different mould. He combined a tall and commanding presence with a singularly winning and gentle spirit. An untiring student himself, he set a high ideal

of industry before his pupils, while the fact that he was something of a pioneer, and regarded in many quarters as a heretic, made his teaching the more interesting and stimulating to enquiring minds. He was the soul of punctuality, and used to lock his class-room door as soon as the hour struck, and any man who came late had to knock for admittance. They seldom ventured to do so twice. He was a man of genuine pastoral instinct and inspired his students with something of his own evangelistic zeal, while, as a preacher, he set them an example of earnestness, simplicity, and freedom from the trammels of pulpit tradition. Something of the spirit of his work and influence may be gathered from the following rules which he laid down for his students :

" The first great thing is to cultivate spiritual-mindedness with regard to the welfare of your own souls, and for this purpose :

" (1) Attend regularly to secret prayer and let nothing interfere with this duty.

" (2) Where two are lodged together attend to social worship regularly evening and morning. If the family choose to join with you, give them a welcome.

" (3) Let your conversation be as seasoned with salt : give not yourself to gossiping, and be careful never to speak to one another about your fellow-students. Take care of gospel gossiping and of enquiring about places and individuals, merely for the sake of newsmongery. Keep a pair of balances between your heart and your mouth, and weigh everything before it is spoken.

" (4) Be particularly careful to improve the Sabbath by laying in your spiritual stock on that day. Make it, if possible, the longest and brightest day in the week.

" (5) Cultivate courtesy and gentle habits, courteous conversation and conduct. Be most courteous to one another and to those with whom you are lodging. Nothing of the nature of forwardness is courteous. Treat every person with respect. Cultivate elegant language, which is part of courtesy. We can never suppose that Jesus practised rudeness of speech, and neither should His followers."

During his student days Fairbairn occupied two temporary pastorates—the one at Fraserburgh, to which we have already referred, and the other at Kilwinning. Of this latter, which lasted from April to June in the year 1859, he has left a complete record in the shape of a most interesting diary. It is written in a boyish hand, very different from the familiar caligraphy of his later years, and presents a naïve and artless picture of his mind and work during these few weeks. It begins with a " Retrospect of events since entering Edinburgh College, November 4, 1858," in the following terms :

" The occurrences of the last six months have been of a very chequered character. There has been much cause for grief, mingled with much cause for rejoicing. Friendship's ranks have been thinned, but we have not been left without hope. Labour has been severe, but we hope and pray not fruitless. Strivings there have been—not altogether abortive, it is believed. But personally there has been a decided want of consecration—sincere reachings after God have not been specially characteristic of our inner life. May God grant us grace to cast away every weight and every besetting sin."

After this exordium the diary is taken up with a long description of the illness and death of two fellow-students, William Candlish and W. F. Edmond. They both fell victims to the scourge of consumption. The loss of two favourite companions naturally tinges the writer's reflections with melancholy but cannot subdue the buoyancy of his spirits. With these men and James Strachan, another close friend who afterwards became minister at Tillycoultry and also died early, Fairbairn threw himself heartily into work and play. He describes their climbs and rambles round Edinburgh, their endless discussions on high themes, and their academy appointments for preaching. They all seem to have been members of some class of Mr. Boyle's. He tells of their presenting their teacher with an arm-chair. " I delivered the address

for which I got an overhauling from the other two. And as we went across to Hope Terrace with it, Strachan carrying it on his head, a happier trio could scarce have been found within the circumference of Leith. Little did we think then of how soon we would be separated by death."

In 1902 Fairbairn wrote to Mr. Boyle on the occasion of his jubilee :

"I vividly remember those days of your ministry in Leith when I—a very raw lad—came under your quickening influence. It seemed then to me as if almost any height was open to you. But you have been content to serve your Master in a sphere that has been none the less distinguished that it seemed to many obscure. When I recall the young men who were then associated in Sunday-school work and in the learning from yourself some of the rudiments of knowledge, my heart goes out in gratitude to him who gave me at the start so manly and so stimulating companions. William Candlish who was the first to fall, William Edmond who so soon followed, and James Strachan who had the brightness of promise and lived but to enter the ministry of which he and the rest of us had so often dreamed. To one alone of the four has it been granted to work through a longer day ; but he is always grateful to the men and the memories that belong to that far-off time. I am delighted to think that to you there has come a period of rest and honour when the armour which you so worthily wore you can lay aside and wait till the Master calls you home."

At Kilwinning Fairbairn lived with a Mr. and Mrs. Beaton as one of their family. For his work at the church he received the sum of one pound per week, from which he had to pay for his board and lodging. He took full pastoral charge of the church, visiting the people in their homes as well as preaching twice every Sunday and conducting a Bible-class and a service during the week. His spare time was more than filled with various studies in preparation for the coming session at the Theological Academy.

From the pages of this diary, brief as they are, we can form a fair idea of what manner of man Fairbairn was in his student days. To begin with, he had obviously a genius for friendship. One of his earliest friends was a ship's carpenter and another a millwright. To the former, W. L. Roy, he wrote from Leith on December 31, 1858 :

"My Dear Brother,

"I wish you, your mother, and sister 'a happy New Year.' No doubt your attention will be completely occupied by the festivities so common at this season of rejoicing. As for me, poor slave, there is no relaxation. I have to toil away while all the others around me are very busy preparing for a day's sport to-morrow, or rather to-day as it will be when this reaches you. Poor me! I must travel as far north as Perth and leave all the fun behind in this good and venerable city of Auld Reekie. Pity but that it had been Dundee, and then there would have been some hope of having a little sport, but, hard fate, I am doomed to spend the evening in solitary loneliness. I suppose you will have the pleasurable society of Mr. J. Lindsay at present. Does he not feel some strong magical sort of a cord pulling him a little further north? Has he no hankerings after a certain young lady in a certain town rather near the coast? But we must be a little merciful on him about this neglect as it is rather a tender point. The wound is scarcely closed and must therefore be handled very lightly. By the by, you may tell him that, if he is in Glasgow, he may expect a visit from me next Saturday. I will not be there till the last train, so he need not expect me very early. Mr. T. Suttie is to be holding forth in Leith on Sabbath. The good folks here will be electrified by his powerful eloquence. Give my compliments to the Lorimers and all my acquaintances. This is the last letter I will write this year.

"I remain,

"Your brother in the Lord,

"A. M. Fairbairn."

As this letter shows, in his intercourse with others he exhibited a frank, kindly, humorous, and even romantic spirit that must have made him altogether attractive. He is equally at home with boys, with working men, with his fellow-students, with crabbed elders of the church, and with devout women like his hostess, Mrs. Beaton. With all of them he could speak his mind and hold his own, and even when most critical was never other than courteous and considerate. He had a great friendship for James Strachan, and in writing of him after his death some years later he recalls the days to which we are now referring :

" It is now nearly thirteen years since I first knew James Strachan. Then we were two lads, raw and vague enough, with very dim undefined aims, but with the settled purpose to be of some use in the world into which God had sent us, specially to serve the Redeemer we loved and the men for whom He had died. Well do I remember now twelve years ago sitting with him in a little back room in his mother's house, stained with the marks of our respective callings, speaking of men and books, truth and religion in our own sage juvenile way until our hearts burned for the power and the sphere to sway men for Christ, when suddenly he said, giving voice to what had been before implied, ' What think you of beginning to study for the ministry ? ' ' It has long been my hope, my wish,' was the answer. ' Then let us pursue our studies together,' he said, and hands were clasped in pledge that we would aid each other, stand loyally by each other in our struggle towards the pulpit, and our hearts were joined in prayer for higher help and wiser counsel than our own. That scene in the little chamber was often recalled. We were never false to its promise. A few months later a third joined us, and after another brief interval a fourth. The life of the little band was eager, vehement, exuberant, very loud and laughter-loving, full of

> ' Jests and youthful jollity,
> Quips and cranks and wanton wiles,
> Nods and becks and wreathed smiles.'

Very disputatious too, though the disputes were more distinguished by warmth than by clearness. Yet withal it was an earnest, vigorous life, however green and untrained. Ah! how well does memory recall nights when after Greek class or Debating Society, convoying one of our number home, we would stand before parting by the seashore under the clear stars or pallid moon talking, arguing, punning, planning until the neighbouring church clock struck midnight, or the hour after it, when we would break up with our raw minds active enough to learn Greek or think in our crude fashion till next class night, when the old scenes would be re-enacted, old or new problems discussed in our warm incoherent way. Those were happy days."

The religious life depicted in the diary is very devout, thoroughly evangelical, and curiously uncritical. No questionings seem as yet to disturb him, though there are clear traces of his keen interest in theology and theological disputes. He certainly agreed with Dr. Morison that the aim of the Evangelical Union churches was not to construct a theology but to win souls. He has his fixed standard of belief and judges things, books, and persons by it rather crudely. He is a passionate defender of the faith, with a very Puritan strictness of morals. But he is diffident about himself and constantly bewails his shortcomings with a rather Werther-like self-consciousness. The impression produced by the diary is that he is surrounded by an atmosphere somewhat overcharged with religious formality, and that he is seeking to live up to it and does not find it altogether natural. He spends much time, pains, and prayer over his preaching, watches its effect with an almost morbid anxiety, yet girds himself to the task with zest and enjoyment. His method of preparation is to write the sermon out and then laboriously learn it off. Generally a few hours were taken up with the writing, then a few more to "commit it." This was a severe discipline, but it no doubt was of great service in training his memory, which remained to the end of

his days extraordinarily good. It was the method of preparation he continued to practise till much later on in his life, when he spoke more and more *ex tempore.*

The following description of Fairbairn as a student preacher is given by one of his junior fellow-students, Rev. James Findlay, of Perth :

" In those days such was the demand for preachers on account of the rapidity with which churches of the Evangelical Union sprang up that the students, from the second year of their theological course, had to go out every week-end as ' supplies,' and it was in connection with these supplies that I became acquainted with many of our young preachers and, notably, with Fairbairn. I well remember that Saturday afternoon when I, along with one or two others, met him at the railway station on his arrival in Galashiels. We were rather disconcerted with his bodily ' presence,' which, to say the least, was not impressive. He was very young, very slim, and very loosely put together—so he appeared to us young athletic Borderers—and we did not expect much from him on the morrow. In this mood when the Sunday came and we confronted him in our pews, lo ! he seemed to be another person altogether in the pulpit. He certainly astonished us, especially the older heads amongst us, who did not know what to think of him. One thing was clear, he was like no other preacher we had seen or heard, and we could not compare or measure him with any of the ordinary standards. He did not in his discourses follow any of the beaten paths. His theological ' terminology ' was not what the old sermon tasters had been accustomed to, and, especially, at that time, when we had been passing through a great revival, it sounded somewhat foreign to ears accustomed to the old evangelical, and often, it must be confessed, conventional phraseology. But the young people took to him at once. His sermons in those days were what, by the clock, would be called short, and they certainly were always short to us in the hearing. But they were full of matter and abundant in allusions and illustrations, literary, historical, and poetical, drawn from widely different sources, ancient and modern, that

seemed to lift us up into a larger world than we had been living in.

"I have said that his terminology was not the usual evangelistic one that was so largely employed at that time, and yet he was a thorough evangelist, and revivalist even, in the best sense. He was full of fire, and spoke as one consumed with the one passion of winning souls to Christ and the Christian life. However far afield he might seem discursively to lead us in, say the first half of his discourse, it was only that he might with greater effect bring us face to face with Christ and the issues of life and death bound up in our relations to Him. To use a Scottish phrase, he more than once afterwards employed in addressing young ministers at their ordination, he 'gar't' us hear and think and make up our minds on the issues he had set before us. His enthusiasm and earnestness there was no resisting. On those Sunday evenings it seemed as if that slender body could not hold in, nor the pulpit either, the ardent spirit that literally wrestled with us young fellows so that we dared not, and could not, leave the church without coming to the great decision that was to determine our whole future for time and eternity. The result was that many of the young people of the little congregation were brought to the Saviour, and in tracing the subsequent history of these I cannot find one who afterwards turned back or fell away from his or her young Christian confession. Some of them entered the ministry and some of them gained high University distinction, and all of them remained true to the Saviour they were led to trust in and love."

His diary also throws much light on Fairbairn's ecclesiastical connections and leanings. He was a loyal member of the Evangelical Union and thoroughly identified himself with its interests, and, though he is always ready to combat it, he never fails to speak respectfully of the Presbyterianism which he had left. But he was independent in a degree that was not common in the church of his adoption, and this gave rise to at least one very interesting incident during his student days. It was apparently necessary for the members of the Glasgow

Academy to make fresh application for admission at the beginning of each session, or at least to give notice of their intention to attend the classes, even though they had already passed the Board and become members of the College. Fairbairn duly made his application for the session of 1859, and in reply to it was requested by the secretary, Mr. Galloway, to sign the doctrinal declaration of the Evangelical Union Church and to declare himself in full sympathy with the movement. The reason for this is probably to be found in the fact that there was at this time a good deal of theological unrest in the young community. This had given rise to the issue of the declaration in the year 1858. It was not intended to be a creed to which subscription might be required, but merely a general statement of the position for which the Evangelical Union had come to stand. It was written by Dr. John Guthrie, but also fully represented the position of Morison. No doubt it was thought that it would be a useful thing if the students of the college could be brought into line with their professors. The step was certainly ill advised, and by Fairbairn at any rate was deeply resented. He took time to think over his action, but at length replied to Mr. Galloway as follows :

" After candidly considering your questions I do not feel myself at liberty to answer them. My reasons for refusing are, first, while not differing materially with any doctrine enunciated in the Doctrinal Declaration of the Evangelical Union Conference—indeed I am essentially at one with it on the leading doctrines of Christianity—still I have conscientious scruples about accepting it as a full statement of my religious beliefs. Second, to make it a test of admission into the Academy is to depart altogether from the original and expressed intention of its publication. The Conference sanctioned it only as a declaration of doctrines, not as the standard of the denomination. Third, I see no reason why I should be called upon to answer these questions now when they were not put on my first admission into the Evangelical

Union Academy. My sentiments towards the Movement and my views of Divine Truth are much the same now as they were then.

"I have thus laid before you the reasons why I do not feel myself called upon to answer your questions. Hoping that they will meet with your favourable consideration, I remain, etc."

The answer to this letter was a summons to Fairbairn and Strachan, who apparently had taken the same position, to attend before the committee and explain their action. This they did on June 21, 1859, and the diary gives the following account of the event :

"It was raining very heavily when we arrived in Glasgow. We called on M—— and borrowed an umbrella from him. We then went up to Geo. Kerr's. Mrs. K—— was very angry as to the manner in which we were treated. From that we went to Haddens, but did not find much there worth buying. We passed on to the office and saw Kerr himself. By this time it was near the time when we should be called up by the committee. We went to North Dundas Street. Strachan and I were called in together. The reason of the questions was explained. It was the prevalence of Scottism [1] and the dissatisfaction now existing among the students—the exit of S—— and M——. By laughing and talking they juggled us out of our scruples and at last extracted an affirmative from us. Both questions were thus answered. Like gentlemen they paid our expenses and bade us a hearty good-bye. We left well pleased that we had got a trip to Glasgow gratis, but sorrowing that we had lost a day to study. We then took a look through some of the book shops. I bought Scott on *Evil Spirits* and Lewes' *Biography of Philosophy*. Strachan bought Winter Hamilton's *Future Rewards and Punishments* and Pearson on *Infidelity*. We then went up to Kerr's and had dinner and tea together. She was glad that we had escaped clear. We saw Mrs.

[1] Probably a reference to Scott's *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice*, which seems to have created some stir in Evangelical Union circles, and against which Morison had written, in the *Evangelical Repository*. Fairbairn describes the article as a masterly production.

Neil and had a talk with her. George came in shortly after and we had some more jollity. He promised to come down and see me in about two weeks. Strachan and I then started for the south side. We looked into the book shops in Stockwell Street as we passed but I did not purchase anything. Then we went up to Martin's and saw Brown.[1] He had also passed and had his expenses paid. He had been in an hour and three-quarters. We then left with the forty past six train. I could not get a ticket for Kilwinning but took one for Dalry. Had to wait there three-quarters of an hour, and met Mrs. Dickie on the road home. She had looked for us at Johnstone. Mr. Beaton met me. They were all glad to hear the result and welcomed me back right heartily. So closed this memorable day."

All's well that ends well, but although Fairbairn and his friend allowed themselves to be persuaded out of their scruples, it is quite evident that he retained his independence both of thought and action. He always refused to regard the declaration as in any sense a creed to which subscription might be required, and at this early stage he took up the attitude towards creed-subscription which he maintained throughout his life. There are several indications in the diary that he was not always very amenable to authority as a student. He criticises his professors with some freedom, and claims and exercises full liberty in his reading and preaching. On one occasion he writes : " Received a letter from A. M. Wilson saying that after the first of August students were not to be allowed to read their sermons. They are becoming far too arbitrary. They deserve a good knock on the head." As it appears that he never read his sermons himself, his protest in favour of freedom in the matter was quite disinterested.

Even thus early in his career Fairbairn was very diligent as a pastor. He spent some time every day visiting among the congregation, and his method seems

[1] Dr. Alexander Brown, who followed Fairbairn as Minister of St. Paul's Street Church, Aberdeen.

to have been that which was customary in Scotland at the time. Almost invariably he conducted worship in the house and turned the conversation in the direction of religious matters. He watched for the souls of his people, and the diary is full of references to his anxiety for their state. In cases of sickness and trouble he was especially diligent in giving what spiritual help he could, and he mourns again and again over the indifference and formality which hindered his efforts. His preaching too was made to serve the same end of helping and building up the people. Much of it was apologetic in purpose, and all of it was tinged with a glow of evangelical fervour. He is very conscious too of the difficulties he had to face owing to the disturbed theological condition of the time and place. The Evangelical Union people were but a mere handful, a fragment broken off from the main body of Calvinistic Presbyterianism. There was real danger lest their new-found liberty should become license. Though the young minister was very jealous of his own rights of freedom, he was by no means always ready to grant a similar liberty to his people. He feels his own responsibility for their faith and is very ready to guide, rebuke, and convince them. But it was not always easy work. He writes in one place :

" Called in by James Stevenston's and some other of the members, after tea we went down to C——'s and then up to Miss K——'s. Met there with a good few of the members. The subject of Scott's *Scripture Doctrine of Sacrifice* was brought up. There were some very unpleasant things said. Miss K—— showed a very bad spirit. She attacked me in an unbecoming and unChristian manner. We each left in a very stormy and disturbed state of mind. But let these things be for ever buried."

The diary gives ample evidence of the very backward state of Fairbairn's education at this time. The point is worth dwelling upon because it shows how largely he was

dependent on his own efforts for the erudition which he afterwards attained. He was now about twenty-two years of age, and in some respects was still doing the work of a fourth-form boy at a public school. He is writing the exercises in Arnold's *Latin Grammar* and struggling with Greek Syntax and the Elements of Hebrew, while at the same time writing essays on difficult theological and philosophical themes such as "The adaptation of the Atonement to the state and character of man," or "The faculty of Abstraction and the possible advantages and disadvantages of a special cultivation of that faculty." One would imagine that it was the memory of his own experiences that made him so insistent in later years on a complete separation between the arts course and theology, and on the necessity for a thorough grounding in arts before attempting a theological course. In other respects too the diary indicates defects in his elementary training. The orthography is very much at fault, nor is the grammar above suspicion. Yet there are already traces of a style that is quite individual and often caustic.

Apart from his study of languages Fairbairn's reading in his student days was varied and desultory. He refers to articles in the *Scottish Review* and *Evangelical Repository*, and his mention of them is always critical and sometimes scornful. He objects strongly to anything in the nature of rhetoric, and has his own views as to what constitutes good or bad writing. He shows himself familiar with Macaulay, Tennyson, Ruskin, and Carlyle, and has a genuine admiration for Bailey's *Festus*. His theological reading is curiously mixed and somewhat antiquated. He mentions Chalmers' *Bridgwater Treatise*, Stowell Brown's *Lectures*, McCosh, for whom he "does not care much," Hugh Miller, Hamilton, and J. A. James (Congregational Divines), Payne's *Sovereignty of God*, and that most convenient theological compendium *The Homilist*. There was much reading and study of the Bible, but it was altogether uncritical, and in no respect as yet can

Fairbairn be said to have found himself either as theologian or preacher. Connection with the Evangelical Union had opened a door for him out of an extreme predestinarianism, but in all other respects he was still dominated by the orthodoxy of his day. The awakening had not yet come, and when it came it was all the more remarkable because his preparation for it had been so scanty. No man ever owed more than he did to his own industry and native capacity for work. But as yet the necessary stimulus had not been given. His interests were evangelistic rather than theological, and in his last session at Glasgow he spent his evenings working in connection with the great religious revival then in progress. It is interesting to note that he obtained there the reputation of being skilful and successful in dealing with anxious enquirers. As one of his earliest hearers said : " He was a great han' at convertin' fowk." Secure in his own theological position he was apt to be somewhat critical of others, and one of his fellow-students never forgot that Fairbairn refused to recommend a certain church to hear him preach on the ground that he was unsound in the faith. The fact that his theological troubles came to him later, when he was in the thick of practical work, while it increased his suffering for the time, no doubt also made it possible for him to broaden and deepen his faith as he could hardly have done as a younger man. As he said himself many years later :

" At the University I was working with the object of acquiring as much knowledge as possible, and I went to my first church very much as the hero of *David Elginbrod* goes from Aberdeen into the country. I found myself in the midst of a secluded people, who looked upon their minister as their teacher and were ready to accept with a profound and sincere reverence what he had to say. I quickly found that while I had been reading they had thought. They stimulated me by their appreciation, by asking deeper questions than any which had presented themselves to my own mind, and by accepting answers

the inadequacy of which was better known to myself than to anyone else. My real mental awakening came after the University and not in it. I learned to be a man who could teach by finding people who were willing to be taught and who, without presumption, expected their minister to do it."

The story of his early days makes it very evident that Fairbairn was one of those who developed late. He was at first diffident and altogether distrustful of himself, and, apart from his mother's influence, there was little or nothing in his home surroundings or in his student experiences to draw him out or make him conscious of his powers. It was not until he came into close contact with men and with the sterner facts of life that he really found himself; and the process, as we shall see, was very painful and even revolutionary. He did not even begin to learn from books in any adequate fashion until he was made conscious of the need in his own heart and mind. His student days were a sowing time, and the seed fell into the ground and died in a very literal fashion before it could bring forth the new life.

The following account of Fairbairn in his student days is written by the Rev. Wm. Taylor, of Edinburgh :

" I first knew Fairbairn in 1860. He was then a student in the last year of his course of studies at the Evangelical Union Hall, Glasgow. Dr. Morison, through ill-health, could not take his class, and at the request of the committee I lectured during the month of September. I can recall him as he sat, firm as a rock, listening with keen attention to the lecture. I do not remember that he ever put a question to me, though many were asked by the other students. He was waiting to gather and store up knowledge, and evidently felt that he must keep silence until he could put questions as near as possible to the foundations of human thought. After he came to Bradford he said to me, ' Your lectures gave me my first idea of criticism applied to philosophy and theology.' His inseparable companion in the class was James Strachan,

a youth of extraordinary promise and brilliant gifts, who attracted at the time more attention than did Fairbairn, who was extremely quiet and retiring. This great friendship was ended by the early death of Strachan.

" In a talk about our early years he told me in substance the following : His father, he said, was one of the most honest and kindly of men, almost too good for those with whom he had to do. His mother was the more energetic and executive element in the home. He spoke of her with loyal enthusiasm. At an early age he was sent to a school in Leith, such as was then common for the working classes. Later he attended a school in Edinburgh. He received a penny every day to buy a bun in the midday interval. He was fond of reading, and read everything he could lay hands on. That penny raised a controversy very often between the hunger of the boy and desire of something to read. Frequently the debate ended in a compromise—a halfpenny for a small bun and a halfpenny reserved for the fund to purchase something to read.

" According to the common custom of those days Fairbairn would leave school when he was about thirteen or fourteen years of age and become an assistant to his father in the flour mill.

" The following story of how he became a minister is partly from himself and partly from common knowledge : There was at that time a very eloquent young minister in the Evangelical Union Church in Leith who attracted the attention of Fairbairn and his bosom friend, Strachan. Fairbairn no doubt soon became convinced that the Calvinistic limitations of divine grace to the elect was untrue, and he and Strachan became members of the Evangelical Union Church. The minister saw that they were very bright, clever young fellows and he offered to teach them the rudiments of Greek and Hebrew so that they might enter the Evangelical Union Theological Hall, Glasgow. The offer was accepted, and they devoted their evenings to study, and in due time were accepted as students.

" Let me say a word about the course of study Fairbairn now entered. The sessions of the Hall were held during the months of August and September, the course

was four or five months. The studies were exclusively theological—New Testament Greek text, critical and exegetical; Old Testament text, critical and exegetical; Systematic Theology and Pastoral Theology. During the other ten months the students were either at the University or preaching in some of the churches or mission stations. Attendance at the University was voluntary, yet it was earnestly desired, though in many cases, often from necessity, it was somewhat irregular.

"From the fact that Fairbairn with his wonderful receptive and retentive memory and his ambition to excel did not take the M.A. degree I feel certain he could not have managed to take the full course of classes. He once told me that when he went as a young minister to Bathgate he found that his literary training, as compared with the Presbyterian ministers around him, was inadequate, and he said, 'I determined that I would never rest till I was equal to the best of them,' and you know what was the great and grand result.

"I have been told that in his early pastorate he did much evangelistic work among the neighbouring villages. At this time he certainly showed promise of his superior gifts and knowledge in two articles which appeared in our *Evangelical Union Repository;* one was on elect and non-elect infants according to Calvinism, and the other was on the Idea of God. The latter was rewritten and published in the *Contemporary Review* and made him famous."

The following are some typical extracts from his diary:

"*May* 22, 1859.—Rose this morning before eight. Looked over my MS. Went downstairs and had breakfast about half-past nine. We had worship after it which I conducted. The church went in at a quarter past eleven. They meet in a hall. The entrance is bad and the inside no better. The roof is very low and very close for both speakers and hearers. I preached in the forenoon from 1 John 2. 2. There are evidently no Scottites here, at least none of them troubled me. In the afternoon the hall was almost full. I preached from 1 Thess. 5. 19. They were very attentive, and I could only hope some good was done.

"*May* 24, 1859.—Rose this morning about eight. Felt rather unwell. My head was very sore. Did not feel much relieved after breakfast. It seemed to trouble me the whole day. We had no worship this morning. It must not be neglected so much. It creates a tendency to do so each time it is slipped over. I had a letter from Young and a paper from home this morning. Young seems to be in better spirits and speaks of continuing some time in Devonport. I took up Mr. Hamilton's Congregational Lecture and read the lecture on 'The nature and remarkableness of Christian virtue.' It was very good, but I cannot say that I like extra well his curt, abrupt style. It needs a good deal of painstaking to follow him. . . . Then I went out for a walk. Mrs. Banks called me in as Mrs. Cockburn was there. She was very happy to see me. We talked away about old things. Her husband and son were away working at Sanquhar. I remained there about two hours and then went to call on Forsyth. Found him far gone. Don't think he will survive all night. He could scarcely speak to me. On coming back went in to Mrs. Banks. Talked to her son, but found him with strong prejudices against religionists. Then came home. Felt a little uneasy, but also that I had done my duty to him. After tea sat down to my sermon and finished the introduction. Had worship about eleven. Mr. B—— conducted it. We read the tenth chap. of Matt. Don't think that I will sit up to-night. God give me more earnestness.

"*May* 25, 1859.—Rose this morning about eight. Looked over some MS. before breakfast. Got a letter from Laurie. He has been very busy this some time. He is getting lessons in Greek from Boyle now. We had worship this morning. I conducted it. Read the 28th chap. of Acts. After finishing it looked over the *Evangelical Union Repository*. Found a very beautiful notice of Edmond's and McLellan's death in it. Looked over some of the Reviews. M—— (Morison?) treats Scott with proper contempt. Serves the fellow out. Then took up my Hebrew. Read two sections of the grammar. Translated the first Psalm. Did not feel as interested as I should. Wrought at it till dinner. While at dinner Mr. Guthrie of Ardrossan called. He was going over to

Irvine, and Mrs. Beaton and I went nearly all the way with him. Came back just in time for tea. After, I sat down and prepared for the prayer-meeting. Took the 12th, 13th, and 14th *vv.* of the first chap. of second Peter. The meeting was not so good this evening. The interest seems not to be great. 'Tis our backwardness that delays it.'

"*May* 28, 1859.—Rose this morning before eight. Rehearsed my sermon for Kilmarnock—the one intended for the forenoon on propitiation. We had worship after breakfast. I conducted it. Read the 3rd chap. of Romans. Then went and washed myself all over. Came up and began to make preparations for going. Mr. Davidson arrived and put an end to these. We had a long talk over things in general. About the behaviour of some of the students and the test now employed. Intended to sound them only on the doctrinal points. Scottism is beginning to be a matter of terror.

"*June* 4, 1859.—Rose this morning as usual about eight. Wrote a letter before breakfast. Had worship after it. I conducted it. Read the 8th chap. of Romans. Through the forenoon was engaged in transcribing my essay. I am not at all pleased with some of it. When dinner was passed I commenced to commit. Took my afternoon's (sermon) first and was occupied with it till past tea-time. Then took up my forenoon's one. Had both finished in plenty of time. I had a parcel from Leith to-night. There were some books in it which I had ordered to be sent through. Longfellow was enclosed, and I suppose mother would not be well pleased with it at all. This week has been a little better than the one before. I have wrought with greater regularity than on some of the preceding. But still there is a real deficiency. I must pull up and endeavour to rectify it."

## CHAPTER II

### FIRST PASTORATE AT BATHGATE, 1860–1872

At the close of his college course, in the autumn of 1860, Fairbairn accepted a call to the Evangelical Union Church at Bathgate. At the same time he was called to Galashiels, but this invitation he declined, as being already committed to the Bathgate church. Bathgate is a country town half-way between Edinburgh and Glasgow, once a centre of the weaving industry, but at the time of which we are speaking inhabited chiefly by farmers, quarrymen, and miners. These, with the local tradesmen, formed the little Evangelical Union Church. Small though it was, it was a church that had had a history. The lineal descendant of the first anti-Burgher community south of the Forth, it had counted among its ministers Robert Morison, the father of Fairbairn's teacher James. Under this Morison the church had joined the Evangelical Union and obtained a reputation for the keenness of its theological spirit. Like most anti-Burghers, the people were strong radicals in politics. They had been well trained in the old voluntary controversies, and were acute if not very well informed theologians. They provided a healthy and stimulating atmosphere for the young preacher, and we have already seen how greatly he felt himself to be indebted to them. The call they sent to him is a quaint and interesting document and well worth preserving.

"The church meeting for the Public Worship of God in the Evangelical Union Chapel at Bathgate.

"*To Mr. A. M. Fairbairn, preacher of the Gospel.*

"DEAR SIR,

"We, the members of the above-named church, after due and prayerful consideration of our present state, being as sheep without a shepherd, and the consequent necessity of our looking out for a pastor, and also of the general satisfaction which your services amongst us have given, have come to the unanimous conclusion to request you to take the oversight of us in the Lord. All the members unite in this invitation, and everyone is prepared to welcome you, should you see fit to respond favourably to our petition, to what we consider a very promising and extensive field of labour.

"The stipend for the present will be £80 per annum, payable quarterly in advance along with the manse and glebe.

"Praying that you may be guided by the Counsel of the great Head of the church, and waiting your reply,

"We remain,

"Dear Sir,

"Yours in the Lord."

The document is signed by all the members of the church—one hundred and nineteen in number—and among the names is that of Jane Shields, the minister's future wife.

The ordination took place on a wild and stormy day in October, the officiating ministers being Dr. Morison and Rev. Wm. Bathgate, of Kilmarnock. With the help of his mother the young minister at once settled down in the manse which stood on a hillside looking over the valley in which the town lies. In this house Dr. James Morison had been born, while his father, Robert Morison, was minister at Bathgate. It had been unoccupied for many months, and had a somewhat cold and inhospitable appearance, though destined to provide a happy home for Fairbairn and his family for many years.

Minister at Bathgate

Aetat 24

James Strachan and A. M. Fairbairn, Students

Of his earliest experiences at Bathgate he writes to his friend Strachan as follows :

" E.U. Manse,

" *October* 23, 1860.

" I have been busy ever since returning home. Last week I wrought endeavouring to put the house in habitable trim. It is in something like respectable order now, and I have commenced operations on the ' live stock ' down the way. I gave them a right good dressing up on Sunday—a kind of sequel to the induction sermon—and let them know what I expected they would *be* and *do*. They took it home, and I was glad to find yesterday that not a few consciences had been pricked. They understand, at any rate, that under the present rule there is to be no sleeping either out or in the church—and that is always something. Our meetings are still good. On the Induction Sabbath the church was well filled at all the services, but crowded at the afternoon's—fuller even than on the soirée night. At the prayer-meeting on Thursday the attendance was nearly fifty, which was, of course, a very great increase. So we have had no reason to complain as yet.

" I have selected the Epistle to the Philippians for the P.M. (prayer meeting). It is, generally speaking, clear, and there is a great deal of fine practical matter in it. I have made no selection for the Sabbath forenoon as I wish to preach a few sermons bearing on some practical matters which they will be none the worse for hearing about. After that, however, I will likely begin and treat them to an exhibition of my critical powers."

*To the Same.*

" E.U. Manse,

" *November* 6, 1860.

" I am as busy here as possible, visiting, writing, and preaching are the orders of the day. Our meetings are keeping up and even increasing wonderfully, and applicants to the number of 14 have already dropped in.

" A member, thinking we might get cold, sent us a ton of coals, and some others thinking I was rather thin, have

poured in an unstinted supply of eggs and butter, and I was more than amazed when a couple of water stoups and tubs made their appearance with my initials painted on them. I am fairly ashamed at what some of them have done.

"There is a somewhat anxious spirit in the congregation just now and I mean to take advantage of it. The folks are seemingly willing to work."

*To the Same.*

"E.U. MANSE,

"*December* 24, 1860.

"Well, Jamie, the New Year's coming round and what is to be done? I am presently haunted by a couple of figures splendidly grotesque—the wonder and laughing-stock of giggling lassies, the talk of gossiping auld wives, and the scorn of sober sanctimonious deacons. But is there to be no more than the spectre? Shall the days of startling transformations into Old Mother Hubbard, etc., never return? Doomed to be parsons, are we doomed to be perpetually grave? Oh, for the days that are awa! At the beginning of last week, Tuesday, I was rather astonished by a deputation of three ladies—all married too—waiting upon me with the information that the females in connection with the church had resolved to present Mr. F—— with a black cloth Highland cloak if he would accept it as a New Year's gift. Of course Mr. F—— had no objection."

From the beginning of his time at Bathgate Fairbairn set himself to complete his studies and to lay the foundation of all his future work. He found real mental stimulus in the conversation of the shrewd and eager men and women who formed his congregation, and he was compelled to give them of his best. He set himself to study with a genuine passion, and now discovered that love for and belief in theology as the queen of the sciences that remained with him throughout his days. He ordered his time with Spartan strictness and economy. While at

Bathgate it was his habit for years to rise at half-past five in the morning, when he made himself a cup of coffee and worked till breakfast, at eight-thirty. For some time he held a weekly young men's Bible-class at six a.m. After breakfast he sat down to work again till his dinner-hour at two o'clock. After a short rest, on three afternoons in the week he visited among his people, and spent the evening in classes, meetings, or other engagements. On the other three afternoons he rode or walked, and devoted the evenings to further study. The hour from eleven to twelve every night he reserved for desultory reading. He allowed nothing to interfere with his morning studies, and his rapid power of acquisition and retentive memory enabled him to cover the whole field of theology and to assimilate what he read to a quite extraordinary degree. He must have spent a large part of his slender income before he was married in buying books, for he soon acquired a collection that was a source of amazement to the visitors at the manse. There is a manuscript catalogue of his Bathgate library in existence dated 1871. It contains the names of nearly 2000 volumes, many of them works in French, German, and Dutch. Theology of course predominates, but there is an unusual proportion of books on non-Christian religions. His reading was thorough and systematic. He has left behind him a number of voluminous notebooks, belonging to this period, containing summaries, extracts, and reflections, giving ample evidence of the laborious care with which he went to work. Here again a large proportion of space is given up to Indian, Chinese, and Semitic religions, his interest in which led him, even at this early date, to obtain and tabulate information regarding them from every available source. To the end of his life the only dummies, in the shape of uncut and unread volumes, his library contained were presentation copies of works more interesting than useful. The great bulk of his books bore evidence of having been read and reread.

Before he had been very long at work in the ministry Fairbairn's theological position underwent a marked and decisive change. Hitherto, though he had shown a certain independence of thought, especially in matters ecclesiastical, he had been untroubled by serious doubts, and had accepted the position generally laid down in the standards of the Scottish Church. The Augustinian theology as interpreted in the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Shorter Catechism, and as modified in the interests of a wider view of the Atonement by the teaching of Morison, had completely satisfied him and formed the basis of all his earlier preaching. That preaching, however, was, as we have seen, always more evangelistic than theological, and there can be very little doubt that his theological views so far had been adopted rather than assimilated. They were a convenient clothing for his thought rather than of its very woof and essence. It was inevitable, therefore, that, with the opportunity for wider reading and more systematic thinking, there should come something like a convulsion. And when it did come Fairbairn was the last man to shrink from its consequences. As soon as he discovered that he had ceased to believe the theology in which he had been trained, he would not conceal the fact either from himself or others. To a friend who visited him in the year 1865 he confessed that he had not an inch of ground beneath his feet. The crisis was the more severe that it had come so late, when he was in the middle of his work rather than, as is the case with many men, in the more elastic days of studentship. But it had to be faced all the same. He gave up his church for the time and went out to Germany to begin his studies all over again, if haply he might regain in some measure the faith he had lost. Looking back upon this experience in later years he wrote of it as follows :[1]

[1] *Contemporary Review*, April, 1907.

"No one could have been happier than I in the quiet manse at Bathgate, where the elders and other officials of the church were sensible, patient, stalwart, thoughtful men who secured to the student time for study, and persuaded the people to overlook the vagaries of inexperience, to forget and even forgive the mistakes of a too self-conscious academic youth. But in the endeavour to learn that I might the better teach, my own faith broke down. The afternoon walks in the hills that rose behind the old manse I vividly remember: every spot was associated with some thought or discovery that but seemed to shatter more utterly the house of cards which the spirit had built in the fond but delusive hope that it might be a refuge from the storm. I had forsaken the church of my fathers, and now no father of any church would consent to illuminate a man made humble by failure. And so, in a mood compounded partly of hope but largely of despair, I determined to seek abroad the light I could not find at home. Well do I remember the day when, feeling cheerless, forsaken of God, unpitied and unblessed of men, I left the manse to take my way to Germany, never expecting to return. Life seemed a ruin: all its plans had been thrown down: and in the desolation one's best and only hope was to find in journalism a new pulpit and in literature a mode of speech more suitable to living men. It is now forty years since I set out on that memorable quest, thinking in the bitterness of my soul that all the old loves were dead beyond any chance or hope of resurrection and return. Yet God's purpose did not fail, though the dreams of man might perish."

At Berlin, where he studied for a year, Fairbairn was influenced by the new intellectual atmosphere quite as much as by any teachers at whose feet he sat. Indeed he has left it on record that his best teachers were his fellow-students, men of many nationalities and trained in very different schools. From them he learned that doubt was not sin but rather a growing pain of the soul, a means to a wider outlook and a clearer faith. He had come from a land where religion was free but theology was bound, to

one where religion was bound but theology free, and the change was in itself an education. Germany was then under the spell of Hegel, and its theology was philosophical in form but historical in spirit. The echoes of the Tübingen controversy were dying away and the new criticism was but beginning to make itself felt. In dogmatics it was the day of the *Vermittlung* or Mediating School. Its outstanding figure in Berlin was Dorner, who had won great fame by seeking to harmonise Christian theology with sound philosophy and by using the dialectics of Schleiermacher and Hegel in defence of the Christian revelation. He was a philosophic historian with a typically German cast of mind, a man of vast and massive learning which found fit expression in a style at once diffuse and involved. By his history of Christology he prepared the way for controversies that were to come, and by interpreting Deity in ethical and personal terms he made possible a more human and less pedantic form of theological expression and faith. Fairbairn attended his lectures diligently and conceived for him a great admiration. That the feeling was in some degree reciprocated may be gathered from a testimonial Dorner gave to his pupil, in which he said that of all the Scottish students he had known Mr. Fairbairn had most impressed him on account of the union in him of the scientific mind and the sincerely pious heart.

Hengstenberg, whose lectures Fairbairn also attended, belonged to the right wing of the school of which Dorner represented the centre. He was the great champion of orthodoxy—one of the most powerful and best hated men in Germany, "a watchful and ferocious cerberus, who thought that the best way to subdue the critical spirit was to meet all its affirmations with an uncompromising contradiction." Schaff says of him: "As a lecturer he generally disappoints the expectations of those who hear him for the first time. For instead of seeing an athletic figure, looking like a lion and speaking in a

voice of thunder, they will find a middle-aged, thin, delicately built, refined-looking, neat, and well-dressed gentleman, reading slavishly from his manuscript in a half-singing, high, silvery, and monotonous tone. But what he says, and the manner in which he says it, is exceedingly positive and dogmatical." Fairbairn was deeply impressed by Hengstenberg, and never altogether escaped from his influence, especially as regards his attitude on questions of Biblical criticism. What he learned in Germany and the change it produced in his relation to the problems of religious thought may best be stated in his own words: " (1) The doubts which had been hidden like secret sins lost their power to harm, and ceased to cause shame. Freedom of expression had taken from them their sting. And with freedom there had come a new personal conviction. So (2) a simple and wonderful thing happened: theology changed from a system doubted to a system believed. But the system believed was not the old system which had been doubted. The questions I had heard discussed both in and out of the class-room in Scotland concerned the decrees of God, whether they were absolute or conditional, universal or partial; the distinction between foreknowledge and fore-ordination, whether God foreknew only what He had fore-ordained and because He had fore-ordained it: whether the things fixed beforehand included or excluded sin: whether predestination was double and involved reprobation as well as election: what original sin was and what depravity signified, whether the one was mortal, the source of all personal transgression, which turned all acts of the unrenewed man into mortal sins, and whether the other was inner and utter or partial and voluntary: whether inability was natural or moral, and whether the distinction these terms denoted was valid and real. What the will signified and what freedom, and whether by nature the will was free or bound. The questions that really mattered to us had been altogether ignored: whether

God was and what: whether He was one as a simple atom or as a complex and complicated organism: what person signified, whether it meant the same thing when applied to God, to Jesus Christ, to His natures and to man: whether God had spoken of or could speak to man and what He had said: whether revealed truth could be known as God's, and whether the process of verification involved an appeal to an infallible authority, outer or inner, and whether these two authorities did not cancel each other and so disprove revelation. What was Jesus Christ and what His work? How were we to conceive the Incarnation? And why was it necessary? What security had we that the Gospels narrate the history and report the words of Jesus? or that the Epistles are the work of the men whose names they bear? What has Christianity done for man and what can it still do for him, whether considered as an individual, a society, a state, or a race? These were some of the questions we wanted to have answered, and we doubted because no answer had been given; but the answer came in the new life created by the new light so suddenly poured into the soul. (3) And so a third and more wonderful thing happened: theology was reborn and with it a new and higher faith. God seemed a nobler and more majestic Being when interpreted through the Son: the Eternal Sonship involved Eternal Fatherhood, and the old controversy as to their consubstantiality took a new meaning when the Son was conceived to be as necessary to the Deity as the Father, with an equal claim to necessary existence. Man too was so interpreted as to be invested with fresh majesty as an individual, and as a race he had a unity which made his fall and his redemption at once more possible and more reasonable. Since God had created out of love, He could not so suddenly turn to hate. Since His grace was His glory, He could not and would not use the ill-doing of ignorance or inexperience to justify His dislike. (4) Nor could the old narrow notion which made salvation rather

an affair of a future state than of this life survive on the face of those larger ideas. Redemption concerned both the many and the one, the whole as well as the parts, the unity as much as the units. Man had collectively suffered loss and collectively he could be saved. Hence his social as well as his personal recovery followed as a matter of course : only the rebuilding of the City of God which had fallen down could satisfy Him who had made the citizen, had planned and built the city. And I went home to Scotland to reinterpret both God and man in the terms of this larger and nobler Christianity. I believed then what I still believe, that the Christ I had learned to know represents the largest and most gracious truth God has ever communicated to man."

This very characteristic apologia illustrates both the strength and the limitations of the theological position for which Fairbairn came to stand. It was profoundly conditioned by his own experiences and needs and was framed, as it were, *ad hoc*. Therefore it always retained an apologetic aim and air which made it more critical than constructive, more timely than permanent. We shall see, as this narrative proceeds, how well and confidently Fairbairn built on the foundations thus laid and how practically useful his work became as a real defence of the faith for those who felt the disintegrating influences of the time spirit, and the need for more solid ground under their feet than they could find in the older theologies. It should be said, however, that Fairbairn's satisfaction with the position he attained at so much cost was so complete as to be almost premature. His thought moved so easily and freely along the lines thus laid down, and opened up to him a field so vast, that he was content to confine himself to it and only reluctantly and with difficulty entered into other and less familiar spheres.

It is time now to return to Bathgate and to the story of the ministry there. The report of Fairbairn's good work in the church and the fame of his preaching soon

became known, and he was looked upon as the most promising of the younger men in the Evangelical Union. Three times during the Bathgate period did he receive calls to large and important churches of the denomination in towns. The first of these was as early as 1862, from the Evangelical Union Church at Greenock. He declined it at once, and without hesitation, on the ground that his work at Bathgate was only beginning, and that for him to leave the church so soon would be to do it, and the cause it represented, a serious injury. A much more difficult problem was presented by a call, received in 1865, from the Evangelical Union Independent Church, Blackfriars Street, Glasgow. The minister of the church was the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, and it was to act as co-pastor with him that Fairbairn was invited. Mr. Ferguson was one of the ablest and best known of the Evangelical Union ministers, and the prospect of association with him in the work of a large church was not without its attractions. But it also presented certain difficulties. Mr. Ferguson's health was not satisfactory, and it appeared likely that the younger minister would have to bear by far the larger share of the burden. It is doubtful also whether Fairbairn would have worked well in double harness, and he had apparently misgivings as to the condition of the Blackfriars Street church. It contained a large congregational element, and it is a very interesting indication of Fairbairn's position at this period that he seemed to regard this as a possible danger. His own health too had shown signs of giving way even in so comparatively easy a sphere as Bathgate, and he was strongly advised by the doctors not to attempt work in a place like Glasgow. He therefore declined the call, though not without some misgivings, on the ground that he would probably not be equal to the demands which the position would, quite legitimately, make upon him.

Five years later, in the spring of 1870, Fairbairn was again approached by a city church, the Evangelical Union

Church in Dundee. But he at once declined their invitation in the following terms :

" While deeply grateful to the Evangelical Union Church, Reform Street, Dundee, for the unanimous invitation it has given me to become its pastor, I am still very sorry that it has done so. I have no intention meanwhile to leave my present charge, and I fear it would be but trifling with you were I to delay, under pretence of considering the call, giving my decision. I hope I am fully alive to the claims of a sphere so large and important as Dundee, to the possibilities that are in it, and to the obligations that are on me as an Evangelical Union minister to do my little best for the Evangelical Union cause, but even in the presence of all these I feel myself hardly in a position to consider your call."

In 1868 Fairbairn married Miss Jane Shields, the youngest daughter of John Shields, of Byres, Bathgate. The marriage was an altogether happy one, and as time went on and work increased Fairbairn owed very much to the serene good sense and quiet home ministry of his wife. In later years he wrote of her :

" My wife might say, as Mrs. Duff, the wife of the great Indian missionary, Dr. Alexander Duff, of Calcutta, said, when someone asked her what she was doing for Indian missions—' My contribution is my husband.' . . . Everything that I have done in public life has been made possible for me by my wife. She has been content to be a wife and mother, but she has been both."

Between the years 1868 and 1874 two sons and two daughters were born, all of whom survive. The eldest son, John, is an eminent London surgeon on the staff of St. Thomas' Hospital. The younger son, Andrew, is a solicitor and official receiver for Worcestershire. The eldest daughter, Barbara, married Dr. Edgar Collis, one of H.M. medical inspectors of factories; and the younger, Helen, married R. Russell Scott, principal

clerk of the Admiralty, and recently secretary of the Royal Commission on the Indian Civil Service.

During the years at Bathgate Fairbairn's immense industry began to bear fruit in various writings. He became a regular contributor to the *Christian News*, the organ of the Evangelical Union, then under the editorship of Dr. Morison; to the *Christian Times*, a local religious paper; to the *Contemporary Review*, then edited by Alexander Strachan; and to the *Evangelical Repository*. His published sermons in this period are extraordinarily striking. They are full of thought and even of learning, but are at the same time passionately evangelical in spirit. Many of them follow the plan common among Nonconformists in those days of "improving" striking events, such as a storm or a colliery accident, or a royal marriage, and deriving from them warnings and exhortations of the most vivid kind. The preacher addresses sinners in language for which his study of the Puritans gave him many a model, and bids them "flee from the wrath to come" in terms of which the sincerity is unmistakable. Even as read the sermons have about them the ring of real oratory, and the flamboyance of the style would not have been quite so obvious when they were delivered. In this respect they show faults both of taste and construction which in his later years Fairbairn would have been the first to condemn in one of his students. But even thus early he was by no means content to follow the lines of an ordinary evangelical preacher.

The following account of his work in Bathgate is given by the Rev. G. P. McKay:

"It was in 1866 when Mr. Fairbairn, as he then was, cast his spell upon me. I had just gone, as a boy, to live in Bathgate, and I was taken to the Parish Church with my people; but I soon got to hear of Fairbairn, for all Bathgate knew that a young prophet had arisen among them. My first sight and hearing of him was at an anti-infidel lecture which he gave in the Public Hall

of the little town, and from that moment I was his devotee. The picture of him, as I saw him then, with his clear, deep-set eyes, and his far-away look, is fixed upon my memory still. He himself, rather than what I remembered of his speech, was to me sufficient proof of the existence of the God whose being he was there that night to demonstrate. 'That man,' said I, 'has seen God face to face!'

"Obtaining permission at home, I was soon found, Sabbath by Sabbath, in the little Evangelical Union kirk instead of in the Parish Church, and there I quickly felt the immanence (though not then knowing that word) of the God who was now to me a living, grand reality. Fairbairn often dwelt on this, and deep, deep were the thoughts he gave us. Truth to say, we could not always follow him. He went beyond, he dived beneath, he soared above all that we could reach, or fathom, or attain to. This I often felt, and sometimes, I remember, grey-bearded hearers made confession of it. But all the while we knew that he was on the track of truth, and, if he was lost sight of now and then, we but watched for the returning swoop that brought his argument within our humbler ken. It was fell preaching, and grand training for the younger folks of that wee kirk!

"In Mr. Fairbairn's week-night Bible-class, however, we got closer to him, and probably received a greater amount of real instruction than at the Sunday preaching. It was a great treat, and a most profitable hour, when, in the big kitchen of the Manse, he opened up the Scriptures to a few of us. To these occasions, and to his private talks with me at that time, I owe more than I can ever tell."

Some of the themes of his published sermons must have been more than a little novel to a congregation like that at Bathgate. There is one, for example, on "The Religious Progress of Scotland," preached in 1861, in which the preacher's attitude to the orthodoxy of the Scottish churches is made very plain, and the history of the past is used to illustrate and justify the Evangelical Union's position. "The stiff old forms that hemmed in

the Scottish theological mind, as the winter ice hems in the vessel in the Northern seas, are now breaking up, and we are manifestly drifting out of their freezing cold dominion. Let theological special pleaders say what they choose, it is a simple and indisputable matter of fact that the people will not tolerate Calvinism in its ultra or original form. The very mention of eternal election or limited atonement or universal decree is dreaded: and never do hearers leave the church so dissatisfied as when either is preached."

Another sermon, published in 1862, entitled "Peace in Believing," was a reply to a sermon by Rev. J. Scott, of Bathgate, on the subject "Peace in Obeying." It concludes as follows:

"My stand to-night has been on ground, not narrowly denominational, but broadly evangelical. I have spoken for Christian truth, not as belonging to my own sect—though, in all honesty, I believe it to hold that truth most clearly, most simply, most fully—but as belonging to the Christian Church. I can appeal to those commonly reputed great men in their respective denominations to corroborate the views now set forth. I can appeal to both the Erskines—the fathers of the Secession Church—to one, recently its brightest living ornament, the late Dr. John Brown, of Edinburgh. I can appeal to all truly evangelical preachers in every age—certain that their testimony will bear out mine. Space forbidding quotation, I shall content myself with a reference to one, and he not the least, Dr. Chalmers. Let us hear how he, after his conversion, addressed his parishioners from his pulpit in Kilmany: 'It is upon the footing of a gift that I offer it (rest in Christ) to you, not that you are worthy to receive the present, but that it is a present worthy of His generosity to bestow. Take it,—there is not a single passage in the Bible to exclude you from this act of confidence. Be not afraid, only believe, and according to your faith so will it be done unto you. You know not how ready, you know not how able, you know not how free, you know not how perfectly willing, nay, how eager

and delighted the Saviour is to receive all who come unto Him—to listen to their complaints, to heal their diseases, to supply their every want, to administer to every necessity.' Now, had I been in a denominationally controversial mood, I would have gloried to quote that passage to show how that man among men, when a flood-tide of overpowering earnestness in exhibiting Christ bore him on, burst the narrow limits of a cramped Confession, as Samson burst the green withes, and revelled in those glorious gospel universalities preached in our pulpits, and proclaimed in our name. But it is for evangelical Christendom we now speak, and we have appealed to Chalmers in proof. Nor is this all. There is a more interesting testimony still. That giant, that man of eloquence, that ' man with the energies of a hundred men,' as Mackintosh called him, preached morality twelve years in Kilmany ; but although with burning words he branded villainy, scorched with bitter sarcasm base hypocrisy, pierced with keen irony dishonesty, deceit, and all the nameless social pests and iniquities, he never yet knew, under all his eloquence, a servant become honester, or a master become kinder. His church instead dwindled in a rapid decline, his grand words rolled over his hearers' heads, and they, as many do in other churches still, slept while he declaimed. But he was converted, preached Christ, and then what a change ! Crowded meetings, anxious hearers, a reformed parish ! And when at last he left for a larger sphere in Glasgow he could address his beloved people of Kilmany thus : ' You have at least taught me that to preach Christ is the only effective way of preaching morality in all its branches ; and out of your humble cottages have I gathered a lesson, which I pray God I may be enabled to carry with all its simplicity into a wider theatre, and to bring with all the power of its subduing efficacy upon the vices of a more crowded population.' "

This revolt against Contemporary Calvinism is also illustrated by a very able and elaborate article published during the Bathgate period in the *Evangelical Repository* and entitled " The Condemnation of Infants." The subject is not one that would readily be discussed in these

days. But then it was a burning question. The Presbyterian Church generally was disposed to mitigate the severity of the standards, and Fairbairn's object is to show how they can find no justification for this in history. He sums up the position in the following terms :

" Modified Calvinism as it now exists, with its double reference scheme, door of mercy open to all, and salvation of all departed infants, is as thoroughly incompatible with the Confessional Calvinism as was the Arminianism of Arminius, perhaps even that of John Goodwin. These notions never appeared to the Westminster divines otherwise than as heresies—how then can they be either expressed or implied in their confession save by way of condemnation ? Many proofs have been given as to their doctrine of departed infants, as many more can be given ; and now we simply ask that counter testimony, not as full, for that is impossible, but even to the number of a solitary explicit quotation be adduced, or the position be abandoned. The voice of one situated as this writer is can do little to persuade those reverend and orthodox divines, whose assertions have occasioned this paper to speak another language than one historically and exegetically untrue : and yet while all the Westminster divines declare against the new sense put upon their old words, he would plead against the retention of a creed after its doctrines have been surrendered. This writer was born and nursed in the church to which these reverend divines belong : her noble traditions, her heroic fathers, familiar to him as a boy, live in his heart still, and have often been sources of strength and hope and joy. Their names he was accustomed to hear, when a child, mentioned with reverence and love ; and changes, theological and ecclesiastical, have not plucked up the ancient feelings. But regarding as he does, almost with dismay, their attitude to the Confession they have subscribed, fearing that a similar incongruity between personal faith and public creed largely prevails in their own and other denominations, he has but to pray them, and all so situated, not to profess to believe a creed which historical exegesis cannot allow to be in any intelligible sense a confession of *their* faith."

Among the topics which interested Fairbairn in his Bathgate days, and on which he used frequently to preach on Sunday evenings, the social question was very prominent. There was a good deal of poverty and unemployment in the little town. The weaving indusrty, on which the people had largely depended, had begun to decay. Miners and oil-workers had taken the place of the weavers, and their wages were poor and fluctuating. In many a family the wolf was never far from the door, and the problem of existence was both difficult and complicated. In the pulpit of the Evangelical Union Church at least, these things could not be ignored. The minister was himself a son of the people, and had known something of the problems and privations common in his congregation. He was an ardent student of Ruskin, and *Unto this Last* was to him, as to many another like him, a veritable trumpet call. He spoke out bravely on the wages question, on the treatment of the poor by the rich, on the moral implications of economics, and on the mutual relations and duties of employers and employed. He had no hesitation as to the teachings of the New Testament on these subjects and as to their binding force on the Church, and he quoted Ruskin as an authority from whom there was no appeal. It was all rather crude and hasty, but the significance of such teaching in a Scottish pulpit in those days is not to be overlooked. In Fairbairn's case it was but the first symptom of a spirit which grew as the years went on, and led him to inspire those who came under his influence with a genuine passion for social service. At the same time he was busy laying the foundations of his theology. On his return from Germany, in 1866, he set himself to write regularly and systematically. One of his earliest articles was on "The Christian Conception of God." In it he developed his favourite theme that the real problem for theology is not "is there a God?" but "what manner of God is He?" The discussion lays down lines which afterwards were

to become very familiar, and gives the first sketch of a position which his college lectures elaborated. He wrote also on "Theology and the Age," on "The Work and Influence of Calvin," on "The Divinity of Jesus Christ," and on "Obedience learned through Suffering."

The last-mentioned article was written at the request of a friend who had suffered much, and is full of that deeply sympathetic insight into human sorrow which made Fairbairn so welcome a guest in the house of mourning. Both in this article and in many of his sermons it is abundantly clear that his pastoral instinct was already very highly developed. This was a gift which remained with him long after he ceased to be a stated minister, as every student who heard him speak on the subject could testify.

The article on Christology, written in 1868, was directed mainly against the work of Renan and Strauss, but it lays down also certain positive principles which appear in fuller dress later on in "Christ in Modern Theology" and "Studies in the Life of Christ." In this article also we have the first traces of the study of heathen and especially of Indian religions which became so important a part of Fairbairn's work. He had set himself deliberately to investigate the Idea of God in all the varied forms of its manifestation, with a view to setting forth its perfect expression in Jesus Christ. This led him naturally to the study of ethnic religions, and, with characteristic thoroughness, he began to form a plan for investigating the underlying philosophical and historical ideas of all the great religions of the world. He began with those of India, and was greatly helped in his studies by the learned Sanskrit scholar Dr. John Muir, the brother of Sir William Muir, of Edinburgh. The firstfruits of this enterprise was an article on "The Genesis and Development of the Idea of God." It was sent in the first instance to Dr. Muir, who showed it to Prof. Max Müller, and he submitted it to the editor of the

*Contemporary Review*. Its acceptance marked the beginning of Fairbairn's long and honourable connection with that periodical.

"I well remember," he writes, "sitting one morning at the parlour window of the old Manse, with my eldest-born baby boy in my arms, and my wife sitting opposite me, when we saw the postman approaching. Little guessing what a treasure he carried, I raised the window and took from his hands a large roll of paper which I knew contained my manuscript. Inside, to my intense joy, were the proofs of the article from the *Contemporary*. It was a proud moment in my life. For years I had been minister in a small church in a small denomination, without any encouragement to persevere in literary effort: and here, in a moment, it seemed as if the opportunity I had waited for had come, and imagination saw the end which ambition had so eagerly desired, already reached."

This was in 1871, and the publication of this article marked the culmination of Fairbairn's theological work at Bathgate. It was followed by others, and later on these together formed his first book. This was not issued till he had been some time in Aberdeen, and we shall speak of it in its place.

Prof. Max Müller wrote to Dr. Muir of the original article:

"I return Mr. Fairbairn's letter with many thanks. I liked his first essay very much, and I am glad to know he is working on. What we want is special work—the general results will come by themselves. You should persuade him to take to Sanskrit, or Hebrew, or Chinese —without some πῶυ στω, it is difficult to work the lever which the Science of Religion supplies for widening and deepening and purifying religion, or what is generally so called."

It must not be supposed, however, that these literary labours in any way absorbed the time of the Bathgate ministry. They were the natural consequence of his studies and of the new light which had come to him, but

they did not hinder him from giving himself to his preaching with unwearied zeal, and from undertaking all the varied duties of his pastorate. But his people very soon discovered that they had no ordinary man for their minister, and they allowed him liberty. They were proud of the fact that, in spite of all the disadvantages attaching to membership of the Evangelical Union, their minister was beginning to make himself felt far beyond the borders of their town. In Bathgate itself his position had become quite secure. His preaching had won the ear of the whole town, and, though he was looked upon with suspicion in strict Presbyterian circles, he could not be slighted or ignored. Mr. Andrew Law, who attended the Bathgate church as a boy, writes of his minister as follows:

"Another townsman afterwards to become famous was then little known beyond his own small congregation. Living on the verge of the town and with easy access to the quiet hills, the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn was rarely seen in the public street. A hard student, a recluse, even then a great scholar, he naturally lived apart from the ordinary life of a country town. Sectarian lines were sharply drawn. The three Presbyterian ministers were friendly enough with each other; indeed the U.P. and Free Church ministers unbent so far as to take part in each other's services at times, but the sect who called themselves E.U.'s, and who were called by their neighbours Morisonians, were outside the pale of brotherhood. As for their pastor, he was known to be a student of German theology, a proof in itself that he was dangerous. He was suspected of knowing something of Hindu philosophy, and it was even whispered that he had quoted in his pulpit passages from the Vedas. Plainly a man to avoid. So others shook their heads when his name was mentioned, and now and then preached at him. All the time he knew more of their doctrines than they did themselves, had even lectured to his own people on the Fathers of the Covenant and the Fathers of the Secession. He had led his little flock one quiet Sabbath evening two miles out of town to a little mound on the lonely hillside, which he had discovered

was the site of an ancient Secession meeting-place, and held a Conventicle there. To his own people he gave of his best. In later years, when fame had come and when thousands were crowding to hear him, his sermons were wonderful, but somehow as time went on the weight of learning seemed to smother the fire of those early days. Probably as a preacher his little congregation in Bathgate had him at his best. His congregation, farmers and other country people, tradesmen of the town, intelligent working men, a few shopkeepers—no professional men—looked up to him with pride and affection, and some of them with appreciative understanding."

There is a story told of an old farmer who used to drive four miles every Sunday to hear Fairbairn preach, and was chaffed by his friends one market day as not being able to understand what he heard. He answered, " May be, aye, and may be, no ; but, man, it's grand to sit in the front o' the laft (gallery) and catch the sough o't gawn past yer lug."

The difficulty of Fairbairn's ecclesiastical position is illustrated by the following extract from a letter written to him from Berlin in 1867 by the late Prof. C. A. Briggs, of New York, a lifelong friend whom he had first known as a fellow-student in Dorner's class-room :

" I wish you would inform me of the relation of your church to the other churches of Scotland. Do you subscribe to the Westminster Confession ? What are your points of difference from the Presbyterian churches ? Somehow we never talked of these things. A Scotchman now here represents you as ' outcasts ' from the other churches. I asked him for your ' heresies.' He could not give them, but stated this as a fact that none of the other churches would recognise you or associate with you. I notice in your article you are rather severe on the old churches. I don't know what causes you may have, but I think it would be better to let them alone. If you can't agree, don't contend ; agree to disagree. Go on in your own way and do as well as you can. The field is the world, and there is room enough for all."

This well represents the position as it appeared to an outsider, and the advice given is excellent. But Fairbairn was certainly not the man to take it. He had left Presbyterianism deliberately, and was convinced that he had found a better way. And he could not rest till he had convinced others, or, at least, had vindicated his position in his own eyes. If he did not love controversy, he did not shrink from it. He was never embittered by it, but he was confirmed in his attitude of protest and prepared for the further step, which came later on in his life, of identifying himself with English Nonconformity.

He was accustomed to deliver a lecture up and down the countryside entitled "David and Goliath," in which he championed his wider theology in the face of the dominant creed, and it is recorded that he returned from one lecture with half his coat-tails torn off. He also took part in public discussion with the leading Free Church minister in the town, and again it is recorded that Calvinism did not always get the best of it.

Fairbairn regularly attended the annual meetings of the Evangelical Union, in which he soon became one of the leading spirits. It seems to have been the custom for the different Evangelical Union churches to present reports of their work at these annual conferences. The following is Fairbairn's report for the year 1864:

"BELOVED BRETHREN, "BATHGATE.

"In presenting our annual report we have to express our gratitude to the great head of the church for another year's unmerited, although not unfruitful, existence. While deeply convinced that religious progress can never be gauged by statistics, we can still report a numerical increase. Our total admissions during the past year have been 48, but over against these we have to place 30 removals—eight of these being deaths, the rest departures from the locality. We have two Sabbath schools, one at Bathgate, another at Armadale, with a collective attendance of somewhere about 250; and in the winter months the pastor holds a Bible-class, which has

hitherto been very well attended. We have two weekly prayer-meetings, one at either of the before-mentioned places ; and besides the usual Sabbath services in Bathgate we have a fortnightly one in the evening at Armadale. On reviewing the work of the past year we feel that while having much reason to lament our own negligence, we have also great reason to confess that 'the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad.' With the earnest prayer that the Conference meetings of this year may be largely blessed to our Gospel movement,

"I am, in name of the Session,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN, Pastor."

He was chairman of the Union in 1870. He examined the students of the academy in Hebrew, the New Testament, and Church History. More than once he preached the annual sermon of the Union and gave addresses on various theological subjects, In these, and in his contributions to the *Christian News*, it becomes obvious that he regarded the Evangelical Union theology as something more than a protest against the stiffness of Presbyterian orthodoxy. It was a living and distinctive thing, and big with promise for the future. One of the most considerable pieces of literary work which he did while at Bathgate was a long series of articles in the *Christian Times* on the Reformers and Reformation theology. While animated throughout by a genuine historical sense, the articles nevertheless serve to illustrate in a very striking way the writer's love for and belief in religious liberty, and his determination to find in the church and the theology of his choice the logical conclusion of the work of the Reformers. Writing in 1866 of the theological position in the Presbyterian churches, he said :

"The Liberal Party in the Established Church, though now defeated, must ultimately prevail. The great majority of the young men, shaped by the literature and science of the day, will join it, and so each year will see it growing in strength. It will become more liberal and

tolerant year by year, and need not be less favourable to evangelicalism than it is more lenient to theological diversities. If it puts itself in the van of the age to lead, and not be led by it, it will be far more powerful than if it hangs like a drag upon the chariot wheels. That work the Free Church seems to have chosen as peculiarly its own, and it would be a pity for anyone to assist it in doing what it so frantically proclaims itself able to do. If the Free Church and United Presbyterians mean to unite into one gigantic embodiment of intolerance, then surely the smaller sects should rejoice in the spirit of liberality that seems growing in the Establishment. Let us ever welcome what will enable us to assert and hold our right to think, to utter, and to argue freely."

At the same time Fairbairn had about him but little of the dissidence of dissent, and was very far from being a merely narrow sectarian. One of his earliest friends, the Rev. R. Hyslop, of Dumfries, writes of him :

" He was never greatly denominational. Of course he was leal and true, but he never accentuated his Evangelical Union connection. I have heard him say in public social address that in his inmost heart he belonged to no church in particular. Had he obtained the chair in Aberdeen University which he stood for, I don't believe the signing of the Confession would have given him any trouble. The Confession was to him literature, history, not a definitive or final theology or a piece of sacrosanct ecclesiasticism. In England he had to be perhaps more Nonconformist than was natural to him. I do not need to tell you how well he accommodated himself to Church as well as to Chapel, and how bravely and intelligently he fought your semi-political dissenting battles."

The following is the letter which Fairbairn wrote to his Bathgate people on resigning his charge :

" *August* 29, 1872.

" *To the Evangelical Union Church, Bathgate.*

" BELOVED BRETHREN,

" I have resolved to accept the call to Aberdeen. I hardly dare realise what is involved in ending a pastorate

which has been to me little else than twelve years of happiness and profit. My heart bleeds as it never bled before at the very thought of separation. Only God knows what it cost me.

"The reasons which have swayed me I shall not attempt to enumerate. I only ask you—which indeed I need not do—to believe that they were not unworthy. I should have felt in staying that I courted comfort, that I weakly yielded to the feelings of the heart against the dictates of the conscience and the judgment. However it may seem to others it certainly appears to myself that, in going, I obey the strenuous call of duty. So far as I know my own heart I could have gladly remained in Bathgate for life and I leave it, not gladly but with an exceeding great sorrow. With many reasons for leaving this unsaid I yet say it, certain that my old and beloved people will entirely believe me. The change may or may not be for the good both of you and me. God only knows. I hope much, I pray much, for the best—in which hope and prayer, dear brethren, do ye devoutly join.

"Committing you in all things to the care and guidance of the great Shepherd of the sheep who withholds no good thing from them that ask Him, I am,

"Yours in Christian faith and love,

"A. M. Fairbairn.

"P.S.—I may say that my way was never quite clear till I knew the self-denying and generous attitude you had assumed. The noble Christian delicacy which made you refrain from urging your own claims and bade me look only to other and wider interests, while it assured me of your sympathy, saved me also from what would have been an intolerable pain, the pain of either refusing your urgent request on the one hand, or doing violence to my own convictions of duty on the other. In this, as in all other matters, your kindness shall be to me a source of comfort and joy."

During the whole of his life Fairbairn never ceased to speak with affectionate feeling of his Bathgate flock. His pastoral relation to them was of the closest. There

is a list of the congregation in his own handwriting with dates of his visits to each family. He always claimed that a minister's first church could do much either to make or mar him, and he certainly so used his opportunity at Bathgate that the experience there gained bore good fruit to the end of his days.

## CHAPTER III

### ABERDEEN, 1872–1877

FAIRBAIRN'S useful and happy pastorate at Bathgate was brought to a close in the summer of 1872 by his acceptance of a call to the St. Paul's Street Evangelical Union Church, Aberdeen. The church was one of the most influential in the denomination. Situated in the heart of the great granite city of the North, it gave to its minister that wider platform and larger audience which his gifts deserved. But at first he entered upon the new work with reluctance. He found it a hard and sore business to leave Bathgate, and confessed that if he had consulted his own comfort and convenience he would have stayed longer in the quiet country manse. But he was encouraged to go forward by the rare disinterestedness of his Bathgate people, who bade him not consider the local interests unduly but rather those of the whole denomination and of the kingdom of God. He wrote as follows accepting the call:

"After a period of the most prayerful and painful deliberation I have ever known I have resolved to accept your invitation. I cannot tell you how my heart bleeds as I write these words. Pray that alike to yourselves and my (now late) beloved church in Bathgate this resolution may be blessed. While I deeply feel the grave responsibility of a charge in a great city, I yet firmly hope, trusting in the Providence of God, to be enabled in some small measure to fulfil them. I come, brethren, expecting from you when in strength co-operation, when in weakness help, at all times Christian sympathy and united prayer."

Writing of the call to his friend, Rev. Wm. Bathgate, of Kilmarnock, Fairbairn says :

" My reasons for remaining in Bathgate are all strictly personal. . . . The church is a very noble little church—liberal, intelligent, peaceful, respectful, respected, and I can honestly say that every year I have been its pastor my love and reverence for it have grown. But it is now stable enough to stand a change without injury, even with profit, and it both deserves and in some respects could command a good man. In Aberdeen, on the other hand, the actuality is little, the possibility great. One would start with a nucleus of a few good men, a church free of debt, a little independent income, and various advantages belonging to work in a busy and intellectual centre of population. The discomforts would likely be many—one must calculate on them beforehand and try to meet them with courage and patience."

One of the difficulties which Fairbairn felt most keenly was the fact that the church had elected its newly retired minister, Rev. Fergus Ferguson, to the honorary pastorate. But the difficulty was soon removed by Mr. Ferguson himself, who declined to accept the office on the ground that it would be necessarily embarrassing to his successor. At the Induction services on September 22, 1872, the sermon was preached by Mr. Ferguson, who introduced his successor to the church in glowing terms. The usual soirée was held on the following evening and gave the Aberdeen people an opportunity of showing the warmth of their welcome. Fairbairn began his new work under the happiest auspices, and with a very clear consciousness of the wide opportunity which it opened out to him. After a few weeks' experience he wrote to his father from his new home, 18 Ferryhill Place :

" The outlook is, on the whole, much more hopeful than I expected it to be, and my change seems wise. Matters move on very sweetly and quietly. I have opened a Bible-class and both it and the prayer-meeting are well attended. The church has been full every night—last

Sunday night the passages were crowded. The people are in good spirits, and ours are far from being bad."

Though Fairbairn wrote and received a vast number of letters in the course of his life, he cannot be described as a good letter-writer. From this time forward his days were extraordinarily busy, and he had but little leisure for the chatty and descriptive writing that makes the good correspondent. With the exception of those written on his travels, his letters are mainly occupied with matters of business relating to preaching, teaching, pastoral and literary work, public affairs, and the care of all the churches. Some of them, as we shall see later, are controversial, and have a very real interest, while others in answer to questions or advice asked are full of weight and wisdom. His more intimate correspondence with his parents and family is largely taken up with domestic details—the health of wife and children, the progress of the education of the latter, the servant problem, questions of housing and furnishing; in all these things he is keenly interested. In his home life he was always simple and charming, the friend and helpmate of his wife, the elder brother of his children, and the most genial and considerate of hosts. The following letters written to his old home during his time at Aberdeen speak for themselves:

"18 Ferryhill Place,
"*January* 6, 1873.

"My Dear Father and Mother,

"We had quite a batch of letters on New Year's Day, which made us feel very happy. My father's came in the morning; one from James and another from Agnes at midday; and so though there 'was absence of body there was presence of mind both on your part and ours. The day passed very pleasantly with us. We asked Mr. and Mrs. Galloway in from Westhills, and invited Mr. and Mrs. Ferguson over at night to meet them, and so spent a very happy evening—all the happier that we often recalled

home, and knew that there we were missed as here we missed it.

"The hope of seeing you has quite cheered us. You will be cheered when you come. When I told Mr. Ferguson you were coming he said, 'I'll be delighted to see them. They'll get their eyes opened,' referring to what Mr. Adamson had said relative to the church here. But you must choose mild weather for the journey. We are all in capital health. Andy quite better. John and baby and Jeanie being all alike well, and your clerical son the same.

"The church is getting along nicely. Meetings still good. We had Prof. Geddes, professor of Greek in the college here, out at church yesterday forenoon.

"Mr. Russel reached here on Friday night and brought your little gifts for which we were grateful and the bairns were quite delighted."

"*January* 30, 1873.

"My Dear Father,

"I wonder a correspondent of your unquestionable ability should fall so far behind. Here am I—your own actual lawful-born son—in this remote region of the world, without a word from you or home for a whole month. Why, sir, what do you deserve? Wait till I come, and I shall tickle your ribs till you dance and cry, oh!

"Now, here's my first bit of news—I am coming to see you—mark that! On February 14, a Friday—lucky day! Await my advent! My very teeth water at the prospect of then seeing the old folks at home. Now as to here—all are well and happy. Mr. Russel would give you the news up till he left. Well, what has happened since then? The church has gone on as usual. I preached a sermon on Sunday night on prayer, and found good to be the result. All the other business there has been all heart could wish. Jeanie is always like herself, good to me, better to the bairns, wondering when she will see grandma, and wishing it was mild enough weather to let her up. John is growing quite wise—a skilful story-teller, greatly to Andy's delight, who insists on John telling him stories every night after they go to bed. I have just heard one of his efforts, and really it's too marvellous to relate."

"*June* 15, 1874.

"My Dear Father and Mother,

"The enclosed photos will complete your stock of us and our little folks. I send two of each of the boys. Keep the one of each you like best and give the others to Isa. If you like the coloured one of baby keep it, and give the plain one sent before to Tib, and so you'll each be furnished with a complete set of your descendants in the North.

"Holiday time will soon be here, and we are wondering about your visit. When is it to be? If not now, it will have to be in August, for the Deeside quarters would, I fear, hardly have room enough. We must go to a farmhouse, have a parlour, two bedrooms, and the use of the kitchen, the people staying in the house. So we should like you to come here, and I don't want you to come in a hurry but to take a good long stay.

"Moody and Sankey are here just now—came on Saturday and preached yesterday. Enormous crowds were out hearing them on the links. Some say 20,000, some as high as 40,000. The city was fairly empty, and you may well believe the churches were not full.

"The boys were out at church yesterday. John went down the passage at full gallop like a horse, to the great amusement of the congregation and horror of his mother."

"*October* 13, 1874.

"My Dear Father and Mother,

"I was glad to hear how well you are and can assure you we are the same. I am now all right. There never was much wrong—only a little tired, and I hope to be all right before coming to Edinburgh, or rather hope to keep all right till then.

"Baby[1] is very restless—no pleasing of her. She keeps crying whenever she is awake, and Jeanie neither gets out by day nor much peace by night. I intend to begin my winter lectures on Sunday week. I shall send on a syllabus when we get it published. They will keep me busy, and I'll have between them and preparation for coming south enough to do. John and I were over at Old Aberdeen yesterday. It was his first trip to the University, and he felt quite a man going there."

[1] His younger daughter, Helen Martin, now about a month old.

"*June* 29, 1876.

"My Dear Father and Mother,

"We are all very well. I got home last Saturday excellently, and hardly at all tired. I preached as usual on the Sunday, and though wearied and not too concentrated in mind, yet better than I expected. Matters are unchanged; there is nothing new here. All is quiet and uncertain. There is no word as to the chairs, and all that can be done is to wait till the day of decision with the greatest possible patience. The book is not yet into the booksellers' hands but will be shortly, and, I hope, with moderate results. It would very greatly surprise me if many were sold. The bairns are all well, wearying to get away to the country. We leave here on Monday, and after that you must write to us at Balnagown."

Fairbairn very soon found that his pulpit at Aberdeen commanded a much wider audience than the members of the St. Paul's Street Church. The students and professors at the University, among others, speedily discovered that a new prophet had arisen among them. From the first his preaching attracted many strangers, and this fact suggested to Fairbairn that he owed them a duty. On Sunday evenings during the winter months he instituted a series of lectures in which he attempted what might be called a definite Christian apologetic. For these he read very widely, and the enterprise not only proved highly successful so far as his hearers were concerned, but produced a very marked influence on the preacher's own mind. It was probably largely under the stimulus of this work that his preaching gradually changed its character. It began to lose the dominantly evangelistic tone, and became more largely exegetical and apologetic in the best sense. It was in this kind of work that Fairbairn especially excelled. He had great powers of vivid exposition, and could enter easily and with sympathy into the feelings of those whose religious beliefs were shaken by the tendency of the times. He had suffered in this way himself, and knew how to use his experience. At the same time

he treated the great questions of Christian evidence and history with a freedom and a candour that were as refreshing as they were new. Both in regard to the history and the philosophy of the Christian faith he had much to say that met a felt need, and he said it with such power and with such a wealth of learning that he commanded not only attention but assent. The following letter from Prof. Geddes is but one among many indications of the effect he produced :

" I feel much moved to write a short note to-day to say how much I was delighted with your admirable discourse of last evening. Among the fine points of it was the demonstration, which, I think, was complete, that Theism is no product of teleology, and that Tyndall's view is wrong and historically false in affirming that the notion of Design *produced* the idea of Theism.

" What an awful pass has David Hume been the means of bringing matters to by his obfuscation of the philosophic idea of Cause ? But for him we should have had no Millism and Relativity, nor would Darwin have found a convenient metaphysic ready to employ. A strong Kantian or Cartesian breeze is needed to blow this smoke of the pit away."

The earliest of these courses of lectures dealt with the following subjects : " The Conflict of Faith and Doubt," " Present Phases of Faith and Doubt," " The Scientific and Religious Conceptions of the World—need they exclude each other ? " " The Scientific and Religious Conceptions of Man," " The Natural Religions—their roots and growth," " Inspiration and Revelation," " The Credibility of the New Testament Record," " The Jesus of History and the Christ of Christianity," " The Resurrection of Christ," " The Influence of Christianity on Civilisation," " The Claims of Christianity to be considered the Universal and Permanent Religion of Man." These were followed by others on the same lines, and the very titles show the boldness and candour with which the preacher

was prepared to attack the questions then chiefly occupying the minds of religious men. In doing so he laid down the lines of his future theological teaching, much of which had a definitely apologetic aim, and was conditioned by the atmosphere in which work of this kind was begun.

Prof. Black, of Aberdeen, wrote of the lectures as follows in the year 1876 :

" Some two or three years ago my attention was directed to a course of lectures then being delivered on alternate Sunday evenings by the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn in his church in St. Paul's Street. Though previously aware that Mr. Fairbairn was regarded by competent judges as a man of high promise, I was not prepared for the rare intellectual treat which these lectures afforded. They were cast in a mould far from usual in such productions, and combined excellences seldom found together, wide knowledge, firm grasp of thought, argument closely logical, a style marvellously condensed and terse without thereby losing aught of clearness, and a vigorous effective popular delivery. It was a striking testimony to the merits of these lectures that the élite of the students at the University, as well as the professors and other gentlemen in town of known intellectual tastes, were found to attend night after night in increasing numbers."

The commanding position in the town which his preaching gave to him Fairbairn used to good purpose. He became busy in various kinds of social and educational work, and had close relations with the University. Among other things he acted as examiner for the Dutch prize in 1875. Apparently by that time he had, on a hint from Dr. Muir, taught himself the Dutch language, a knowledge of which he found necessary for his study of Comparative Religion. It was this subject more than any other which occupied his attention during his time at Aberdeen. He was in frequent correspondence with Dr. Muir and Professors Tiele, Chantepie de la Saussaye, Rauwenhoff, and others on the subject, and he followed up his article in the *Contemporary* on " The Genesis and Development of the Idea of

God" with others on "The Belief in Immortality—an Essay in the Comparative History of Religious Thought," and on "Race in Religion." Dr. Muir arranged for him to lecture for the Edinburgh Philosophical Society on the Science of Religion, and was anxious that he should help in the work of translating Kuenen's *Prophets of Israel*. This, however, Fairbairn declined.

During the time that he was at Aberdeen he also contributed regularly to the *Scotsman* and to the *Aberdeen Free Press*. His articles were on various ecclesiastical and theological subjects, and were sometimes used in both papers as "leaders." He was also an indefatigable reviewer. His contributions to the *Contemporary Review*, beside those on Comparative Religion already mentioned, included an article on "The Westminster Confession of Faith and Scotch Theology," and three others on "David Frederick Strauss: a Chapter in the History of Modern Religious Thought." These appeared in 1876, and in the same year he began writing in the *Expositor* the series of papers afterwards published as "Studies in the Life of Christ."

The article on the Westminster Confession was a most able and timely production, which faced, with a boldness unusual in those days, the situation caused by the movement of thought in a church which was definitely creed-bound. As we have already suggested, this was a subject on which Fairbairn felt strongly, and he now spoke as strongly as he felt. The greater part of the article is occupied with a masterly historical sketch of the antecedents and occasion of the birth of the Confession, and of the fate it had met with both in England and Scotland. The moral of the story may be summed up as follows:

"Modern tendencies in Scotland, as elsewhere, are modifying, even in the most unexpected quarters, the old faith and its characteristic dogmas. The country as a whole suffers from widespread theological unrest. Currents of liberal and progressive thought ever and again

concentrate and explode like hidden torpedoes, with such results of alarm and outcry as can be imagined. While Conservatism, though in a diminishing degree, reigns in the pulpit, Liberalism reigns in the Press; and in the Protestant country most proverbial for its theological unanimity influential and representative journals may almost any day be seen waging a scornful war against the traditional orthodoxy."

"It is an evil thing for any church to fall behind the intellect of a country, or to float out of sympathy with it in its most earnest and religious endeavours to discover whatever of God's truth Nature or Man, Scripture or Science, may reveal. It is a thing no less evil for any church to swear by the standards of the past, when its faith has been permeated and almost transformed by the thought of the present. Church courts may coerce or suppress individuals: they cannot turn back or quench general tendencies. Progressive clergymen may be scarce, but are increasing phenomena, and while they may be silenced or awed into muffled speech by ecclesiastical censures, the spirit of which they are but the manifestations works more fearlessly and fatally among cultured laymen. And the question for the churches to consider is, whether they are to estrange and drive into unwilling antagonism men who are Christian at heart, but are too conscientious to subscribe a burdensome and oppressive creed, which pledges to many things they do not and cannot believe, or by a timely removal of the more antiquated and obnoxious portions to draw these men into sympathy with the evangelical thought, and community with the religious life of the nation. Neither nations nor churches exist for creeds, but creeds for nations and churches, and the ecclesiastics of to-day will incur a grave, nay, terrible, responsibility if they sacrifice the religion of the future to their zeal for an old and effete creed."

These words were extremely pertinent in view of the discussions in connection with the case of Prof. Robertson Smith, which were then just beginning. They are no less pertinent to-day in view of the position in the Anglican Church.

By leaving Presbyterianism for the Evangelical Union Fairbairn had shown himself ready to abide by the principles here set forth, and the position was one from which he never departed. That his opinions were shared to some extent by Presbyterians themselves may be argued from the fact that the United Presbyterian Church, by its Declaratory Act of 1879, modified the Confession of Faith very much in the direction that Fairbairn desiderated.

Of this Dr. Adam C. Welch wrote in 1897 :

" Though the Secession had cast out Morison, it could not cast out the thoughts which had produced Morisonianism. The Evangelical revival was ebbing in one form, but was leaving its precipitate in a fresh statement of the old theological positions, as every religious movement must do. The new results of Biblical criticism were beginning to be apparent. Something was needed in all Scottish church life to bring the teaching of the standards into closer agreement with the faith by which the churches were doing their work, and to recognise the altered attitude towards Holy Scripture which Biblical criticism was forcing on all the Reformed churches of Christendom. The year 1879 saw the Declaratory Act passed—an Act which, as it was the first of the kind, was also a proof of the life which demanded such a change, and of the value of that Christian liberty which made it possible."

Fairbairn's articles on Strauss were a brilliant excursion into historical theology, and show the writer's critical and expository powers at their best. The style is clear, vivid, and incisive, less involved and antithetic than it afterwards became, and always provides fit clothing for his thought. His own Hegelian sympathies enabled Fairbairn to do full justice to the work of the Tübingen school, without in any sense detracting from the pertinence of his criticism. He points out the debt which Strauss owed to Hegel on the one hand and to Schleiermacher on the other :

"In the school of the philosopher he learned the speculative principle from which he started and end to which he travelled: in the school of the divine he found the tools which enabled him to cut his way from the principle to the end. But though he thus stands related to both, both could, and certainly would, have disowned him, as in any respect a legitimate or natural son."

He traces out the varied and erratic career of Strauss through all its windings, and shows how the mythical theory of the *Leben Jesu* was but the logical development of his perverse interpretation of Hegel's teaching.

"Hegel meant his philosophy to explain what had been and is: Strauss used it to determine what must be. The eternal process became the immanent God realising Himself in the invariable and necessary order of nature. Deity was impersonal, miracle impossible, and so the supernatural incredible."

The controversy which the *Leben* caused, and the efforts of Strauss to vindicate himself and his position, are acutely and sympathetically treated. Then follows a trenchant criticism of the Glaubenslehre—a dogmatic based on a pantheistic monism, full of unreconciled antitheses, and written to prove that Christian theology has ceased or is ceasing to be. The third article deals mainly with the new *Leben Jesu* and with "The Old Faith and the New." The position is summed up thus:

"Strauss made three great endeavours to be a constructive religious thinker, but in none of them did he succeed, though perhaps—as there is often but a step between success and failure—his first and greatest failure may have come nearest success. He tried first to construe speculatively the supreme evangelical facts: secondly, having dissolved the cardinal doctrines of Christian theology, to resolve the residue into principles of the absolute philosophy: thirdly, to build out of the theory of evolution, supplemented by a superficial optimism, a new religious conception of the universe."

The moral of the whole is pointed in the final paragraph :

" On the whole we must conclude that David Frederick Strauss had a great work to do, and even after every abatement has been made, did it. He has been in our century a minister of God for good. The church has need not only to give account of its stewardship, but to show its right to be a steward of the divine mysteries. We ought not to go on believing by custom, living by retrospect. We cannot do it if we would. The church has debts to the past, but duties to the present. These are summed up in making religion a living power, the supreme vehicle of spiritual realities to our day. We ought to be as patient and fearless in making our theology as were Paul and John, Athanasius and Augustine, Luther and Calvin : and if we are, it will be as thoroughly living for our contemporaries as their theologies were for theirs. Truth lives in conflict, and must not fear it, dread no change of form that can secure permanence and vitality of substance."

There are no better examples of Fairbairn's theological method and aims than the writings just cited. They show how he worked out his philosophy through history, how his criticism had always a constructive purpose, and how he never suffered himself to move too far away from living religious experience. Very characteristic is his easy and masterful handling of most complex situations, and his learning lights up the subject without overburdening it. The voluminous notes and references, even in mere review articles, show the thoroughness of his method, and the careful and scholarly bent of his mind. In later years, when he became a theological teacher, nothing so roused his wrath as careless and slipshod work, without reference to authorities. He practised in this regard everything that he preached, and made it a matter of conscience to know every author to whom he had occasion to refer. The result was many a brilliant characterisation which, though it might seem to be

thrown off *currente calamo*, was really the result of careful reading and study. Even the work that Fairbairn did for magazines and newspapers was more than merely ephemeral. It all helped to lay the foundations of his theology, and became part and parcel of an equipment which stood him in good stead in after years. He read very rapidly, and had the faculty of grasping very quickly the heart of a book or the main drift of an argument. In reviewing, it was his habit to call up all that he knew of the literature of the subject under discussion, and whatever he read his extraordinarily retentive memory enabled him to pigeon-hole for future use. In this way he amassed an encyclopædic knowledge of theology and its literature and of every subject which could in any way be regarded as ancillary to it.

The work which Fairbairn was now doing naturally brought him much before the minds of those interested in academic and intellectual pursuits. He had himself a strong bent in the direction of teaching, and to this all the circumstances of his life seemed to point. In 1875 Dr. Morison wrote to him that he was thinking of resigning his Professor's Chair at the Glasgow Evangelical Union Academy, and suggested that Fairbairn should take up the work.

"Many eyes will be turned to you, and if you were at all willing to occupy the Chair your title is pre-eminent. I felt a fear that it would be in vain to look to you. But if you would accept a Chair, I thought that a new one should be created for you—Apologetical Theology—which would give the students the benefit of being quickened by you in the direction of all the great underlying questions that have to do with the relation of theology in general and Christianity in particular to Philosophy, Science, and History. I do not think that work of that kind in the Academy would be in any way prejudicial to you. It would doubtless be of the greatest moment to all the capable minds that should come under your influence. It is but little that can be done in our

little Institution. But an academic spirit like yours would have a moulding influence on all the associated departments."

Though Dr. Morison wrote thus on his own authority, the suggestion was taken up by others, and in July, 1876, Fairbairn received a formal invitation from the Committee of the Academy to the Chair of Apologetics. He at once intimated that he was not prepared to accept it: but this did not mean that he was not ready to contemplate the possibility of leaving the pastorate for the Professor's Chair. In the spring of 1876 he became a candidate for the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Aberdeen in succession to Dr. Martin, and in the same year he applied for a similar post in the University of St. Andrews in succession to Prof. Flint. In both cases he was unsuccessful. As is not unusual with Crown appointments, both political and ecclesiastical considerations came into play, and there is no doubt, as one of his supporters put it, that the little letters E.U. had much to do with the defeat of a candidate who was recognised on all hands to have the highest possible qualifications for the post. The work of candidating for a Scotch Chair, whatever may be the case now, was in those days rather a sordid and humiliating business. Testimonials had to be collected from far and near, various interests and persons to be placated, influential dignitaries to be interested, and the whole case of the applicant to be dressed up in a way that must have been very galling to a man of sensitive spirit. Fairbairn, however, had not much of this to do himself. His friends supported him gladly and spontaneously, and the list of his sponsors gives eloquent testimony to the place he had already made for himself in the esteem and admiration of scholars both in Great Britain, Holland, Germany, and America. He was supported among others by Professors Geddes, Milligan, Robertson Smith, Lindsay, J. Stuart

Blackie, Max Müller, Muir, Dorner, Tiele, and Rauwenhoff. Many of the letters received from them were far more than mere testimonials, they speak of a personal admiration and affection that must have been as gratifying as it was unexpected. He was not greatly cast down about his failure. After the St. Andrews appointment had been made he wrote to his mother:

"*August* 2, 1876.

"St. Andrews has gone as I expected. I am not surprised, hardly disappointed. These things are often curiously managed. My efforts have failed in one respect, but been successful in another and better. Aberdeen may very probably, will almost certainly, go elsewhere—fall to another than I. If it does we shall be able to bear that too.

"I got home safely—found them all wearying much for me. We have often spoken and thought of you since then. Keep up your heart and be full of faith in times of peace and union still to come, in a land and time where death shall have ceased."

The reference in this last paragraph is to the death of his father, which had taken place in Edinburgh shortly before this date. Though their relations had always been cordial and affectionate, Fairbairn had long since ceased to look to his father for help and guidance. He had much less in common with him than he had with his mother, and the references he makes to his father's death are all with the view of comforting her and making up to her the loss she had sustained. As often happens, the son's work had carried him into regions where the father was not at home, but as does not always happen, in this case there was no diminution of love or confidence on either side.

Fairbairn probably shared the opinion that his connèction with the Evangelical Union would be prejudicial to his prospects of ever obtaining a professorship in Scotland. During the contest for the two Chairs he wrote the

following letter to the Secretary of State for Scotland in order to explain his position :

" My Lord,

" It has been suggested to me that you might wish to know the views of the church to which I belong. The suggestion appears to me the more reasonable as our church is small and its theology imperfectly known, and you were kind enough to ask concerning it when I had the honour of seeing you in London.

" Allow me then to say that we agree in every essential point with the theology of the Scotch churches. Our points of difference may be reduced to two. We hold (1) a universal Atonement, or the sacrificial death of Christ as a death for all ; (2) a conditional election, or election to eternal life through faith. Our differences with the above churches have been growing less every year. Had theological thought been as liberal thirty years ago as it is to-day, our denomination had never been. This is the opinion too of many in the greater churches. Our theology simply tried to soften some of the severer aspects of Calvinism and grew out of a view of the divine Fatherhood identical with the one so ably expounded by the late Professor Crawford. His book exactly represents our position, both as to the Fatherhood of God and the nature and necessity of the Atonement.

" I may say as to ecclesiastical questions, we are not as a body voluntaries. For myself I have taken no part in any movement against the Church of Scotland, but have often spoken in its defence, believing that a national church is the ideal church, consecrating the state and connecting religion with all the forms and phases of its life."

This is extremely interesting in view of the later developments of Fairbairn's mind on the subject of the relations between state and church. These will appear in due course, but meanwhile it is well to note that he passed through the stage represented in this letter.

In this same year, 1876, his first book appeared. It was entitled, *Studies in the Philosophy of Religion and History*, and consisted of four essays or studies—(1) The

Idea of God : its Genesis and Development ; (2) Theism and Scientific Speculation ; (3) The Belief in Immortality ; (4) The Place of the Indo-European and Semitic races in History. The author writes in the preface :

"The resolution to issue in a collected form the following 'Studies' was come to after considerable hesitation. They are mostly tentative. They embody, indeed, the results of much thought and not a little enquiry ; but they were and still are intended to be 'studies' preliminary to what should be at once a philosophy and a history of religion."

This is a very true characterisation. All the ideas, and they are many, which the book contains emerge again and again in more or less developed form in Fairbairn's later work. He always refused to reprint the book because he recognised only too clearly its limitations, and because the rapid advance of anthropological enquiries into the origin of religion soon left many of its positions far behind. As he once said to the present writer, the book was a foundation, and the best thing for a foundation was to be hidden. At the same time its tentative and introductory character should not be allowed to obscure the fact that, at the time at which it appeared, it was a very remarkable performance. If many of its conclusions have now become commonplaces, and others have been altogether abandoned, there is still due to the writer the credit of having stated them when and how he did. The science of Comparative Religion, and even the historical study of religion, was then in its infancy, and Fairbairn was among the first in this country to use the work of men like Muir, Tiele, Max Müller, and Chantepie de la Saussaye, and to show its intimate bearing on theological and religious conceptions. The book is really a plea for and vindication of the historical method in the study of religion and religious ideas. It is an attempt to escape from the dogmatic and a priori theories common among materialistic scientists on the one hand, and orthodox theologians on the other. The writer argues :

"We cannot accept any hypothesis which would evolve the idea of God from delusions or dreams or fears. Shall we trace it then to a supernatural source, to a primitive revelation? But a primitive revelation were a mere assumption incapable of proof—capable of most positive disproof. Although often advanced in the supposed interests of religion, the principle it assumes is most irreligious. If man is dependent on an outer revelation for his idea of God, then he must have what Schelling happily termed 'an original atheism of consciousness.' Religion cannot in that case be rooted in the nature of man—must be implanted from without. The theory that would derive man's religion from a revelation is as bad as the theory that would derive it from distempered dreams."

Again:

"But religion is not a science, or any constructive or reasoned system of thought that can be opposed to it. It is simply spirit expressing in symbol its consciousness of relations other and higher than physical and social. Religion is a permanent and universal characteristic of man, a normal and necessary product of his nature. He grows into religion but works into theology, feels himself into the one, thinks himself into the other. He is religious by nature, theological by art. In a sense it can be said, there is only one religion, but there are many theologies, just as every human being knows he is a man, but not every human being knows what man is."

In his derivation of religion from the nature of man himself Fairbairn is conscious of his debt to Schelling and to Max Müller, but if he adopted their position he expounded it in terms that were all his own, and gave to it a theological and religious setting and form that made it almost a new thing in his hands.

The second essay, "Theism and Scientific Speculation," contains the substance of the lectures given before the Edinburgh Philosophical Institution. It discusses the relations between God and nature, or the world of experience, in terms of recent scientific speculation. It

abandons the old idea of God as the transcendent artificer, with the teleology that was based upon it, but shows how even modern science still requires the postulate of God; how evolution is only a modal, not a causal explanation of things; and how the ultimate unity must be found not in matter but in conscious mind. The relation of God to the universe is set forth thus:

"Nature realises our idea of God, shows His energies in action, His life in contact with ours. But so to conceive the relation of God and nature is to conceive the world not as outside or beside God but as in Him; to conceive no *here* for it, no *there* for Him, but He everywhere in it, it everywhere living, moving, and existing in Him. Transcendence is not thus denied, but rather affirmed. God does not depend on the world for His being, but the world on Him. It is not the cause of His existence, but He of its. When so much is said, absolute and therefore transcendental being is predicated of God. But when He is conceived as creator He is conceived as related, and immanence in the creation not only expresses His mode of creative action but is the only form of thought in which the antithetical notions of the absolute and the relative can be reconciled."

The last two essays in the book on the belief in Immortality and the place in history of the Indo-European and Semitic Races have been rendered almost obsolete by the great advances since made in anthropological science. They have now little more than an historical value and interest, as indicating that their author did pioneer work on the subject, and as marking the stage of speculation which had been reached at the time when he wrote. The book as a whole was very favourably received. The *Scotsman* placed it side by side with Prof. Flint's *Philosophy of History* as representing the best work of the new school of historical theologians whose advent it welcomed. The religious papers, generally speaking, were critical but sympathetic. They welcomed the writer as a new champion of the cause of positive religion, they rejoiced in his

acute polemic against Herbert Spencer, but they showed themselves a little afraid of his methods and more than a little uncertain as to where they might lead them. One result of the publication of the book was an entirely new appreciation by orthodox theologians in this country of the importance of the history and philosophy of religion and of the comparative study of religions. For the effect of this in widening our conception of religion itself and of its place and function in human development we are largely indebted to Fairbairn's work.

The following letter, written to the Rev. P. T. Forsyth, illustrates some of his views on this question :

"BYRES, BATHGATE,

"DEAR MR. FORSYTH, "*July* 11, 1877.

"I have been very much interested in your remarks on the Semitic race, etc., and am glad to see that you are thinking of the deeper and more providential relations of such enquiries. There is a book (in German) by Graetz on the racial peculiarities, but it is a very foolish and ill-informed work—not worth any man's study. The only effective method of studying the racial peculiarities is through their various mental products.

"Your remarks on 'inventive' and 'creative,' etc., are most interesting. B. Smith's book is very incorrect and unsatisfactory ; he often misunderstands his authorities. Dozy's description of the Arab *in his deserts* is most correct, but not correct if applied to the Arab in the city. His own work proves as much. As to Revelation and the creative faculty of the Jews, it may be enough to say that it depends on the idea of the former, and the mode of its operation or production, whether it in any way conflicts with the latter. An endowment which the latter term may describe may be a main element or condition in the production of the former.

"If you look at the Semitic family as a whole you will find that its place in commerce and politics is almost as eminent as its place in religion—that in each it can produce though it cannot perfect.

"Dods' is a very excellent book, open-minded, genial, and generous; but only the book of a cultured man who has turned his attention to the subject—not of a student who has studied it. Excuse these very hurried sentences and believe me,

"Yours sincerely,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

Fairbairn's relations with his church at St. Paul's Street were altogether happy, though he had his share of the difficulties incidental to an Independent Church. He won the affection of the people in a very marked degree, and his labours among them were fruitful beyond expectation. When he came to the church it was but the meeting-house of a despised sect. When he left it it was one of the chief centres of religious influence in the town. The church became crowded, especially at the Sunday evening lectures, and some enlargement of the building soon became necessary. This was carried out during his ministry. Nor was his work confined to the pulpit. There are members of the church still living who remember him as a beloved pastor and a very real friend. He held two theological classes in connection with the church, one for young women with thirty-seven members, and another for men with a membership of seventy-three. This was the kind of work in which he delighted, and there are many who still remember the inspiration and stimulus they derived from his teaching.

Of his life at Aberdeen Sir W. Robertson Nicoll writes:

"I remember very well the talk and the expectation about his coming. Externally, things were not in his favour. St. Paul's Chapel was then a plain building in a back street, and the church worshipping there was mainly made up of working people. Fairbairn's predecessor was the Rev. Fergus Ferguson, a man who took up the ministry after he had retired from business, and laboured for souls with apostolic zeal. He was highly and generally respected, and among his people were many pious and instructed

believers. While faithfully serving them, Fairbairn appealed to a wider audience. By this time his mind was fully stored. He was a marvel of physical and mental vigour. He drew the town by his Sunday evening lectures on such subjects as Baur and the Tübingen School, the Authorship of the Fourth Gospel, and the like. Not a few students who had read his articles were attracted, and the church on Sunday evenings was invariably crowded. The University was represented by men like Sir William Geddes and Dr. Milligan. But there was a very large proportion of intelligent and, in not a few cases, sceptical artisans. Fairbairn never used a note ; he never spoke for less than an hour. His lectures were full of names and facts and dates and quotations, delivered with unbroken fluency, in a kind of chant, and with much gesticulation. They were remarkable feats in every way, and I never heard anything quite to be compared with them. But a few of us believed that the very best side of Fairbairn appeared more clearly in his wonderful Sunday morning services. There cannot be many now who remember them. The church was very thinly attended. There was a mere sprinkling of strangers in addition to the regular congregation. One was struck by the grave, subdued air of the worshippers. Most of them were evidently poor, though decently clad. Not a few had drunk the cup of sorrow. They had found life a 'sair fecht.' They needed consolation and strength. They turned to Fairbairn's pulpit weather-beaten faces, brows furrowed with care, eyes that had shed difficult tears, and had sometimes lightened with unearthly lustre. The most beautiful thing, as it appeared to me, in Fairbairn's character was the way in which he set himself to succour, to uplift, to inspire the flock committed to his care. To my mind his morning sermons were far superior to his evening lectures. They were simple, but full of pity and sympathy. The preacher knew what his hearers were thinking and needing, and what they had experienced. His prayers, in particular, were very memorable, and a few sentences have lingered with me, like this one : 'Some of us live by the sweat of the brow, and some by the sweat of the brain, and some by the sweat of the heart, and that, O Lord, Thou knowest, is the hardest sweat of all.'

Fairbairn seemed at this time to be heavily weighted with the thought of death. I remember several mornings in which he practically took for texts sections of 'In Memoriam.' He would read the passage first and then interpret it. It was a new and memorable experience to see how, as he brought out the meaning and sent it home, the faces of the listeners would kindle and shine. Heads were bent forward, eyes grew more and more eager as the preacher expounded his theme and added the scripture to the poetry. We saw the real man—how simple his heart was, and how kind! Fairbairn had a noble pride in the old Scottish dissent. He knew that earnestness of principle was the main thing in life, and that nothing could make up for the want of it. He never pitied himself for being a member of a small sect. He was infinitely above such paltriness, and rejoiced in his heritage and in his brethren. He was a man of the people, and he loved the people. The formidable critic, the profound scholar, the trained thinker was before all things a man in Christ, and to the end he was faithful to his own youth.

"Somehow, and probably because of these days, I have long associated Fairbairn with Millet, the greatest of democratic artists. Like Fairbairn, Millet loved the Psalms. He found in them all he painted. Both men loved the beauty of nature, but to them man was more than nature. 'I see very well,' wrote Millet, 'the aureoles of the dandelions and the sun spreading his glory in the clouds above the distant worlds. But none the less, I see down there in the plain a steaming horse leading the plough, and in the rocky corner a man, quite worn out, whose *han* has been heard since morning, and who tries to straighten himself and take breath for a moment. The drama is surrounded with splendour. It is not my invention, and this expression—'the cry of the ground'—was heard long ago. Fairbairn might have made these words his own."

The following letters mark the close of Fairbairn's work at Aberdeen :

"*February* 21, 1877.

"*To the Deacons of St. Paul's Street Church.*

"DEAR BRETHREN,

"I think it becoming and dutiful in me that I should inform you that I have been invited to accept the Principalship of Airedale Independent College, Bradford. The invitation was purely spontaneous, not only unsought but unexpected. I feel very much distressed at the uneasiness certain to be caused to the church, and I wish to assure you that all the interests concerned will receive my fullest and most prayerful attention. However, I also feel that the invitation has come in a way, and is to an office that almost compels me to regard it in a favourable light. You will understand that I do not wish you to act in any way—I pray you not to do so—I wish simply to inform you on a matter which concerns your interests as well as mine, and to assure you that all these interests will be fully weighed before I come to a decision. So soon as I do so I shall duly inform you. Praying that the great Head of the Church may guide us wisely,

"I am, dear brethren,

"Yours most affectionately,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

*To the same.*

"*March* 1, 1877.

"DEAR BRETHREN,

"I have now to intimate to you and through you to the church the decision I have reached. I have accepted the invitation to Bradford. I have many regrets in breaking up the pastoral relation that has, for the past four and a half years, existed between us, but the call has seemed so much a call from God as to leave me no alternative. I shall always remember with gratitude your kindness and forbearance and cordial co-operation in the manifold labours and anxieties connected with the work and administration of the church, and I pray you to hold me in kindly and prayerful remembrance.

"My connection with the church need not, so far as I am concerned, terminate until midsummer, but this is a matter which must be strictly determined by your own interests which are also in the highest degree mine. Act in the choice of a minister as if the church were already vacant and with such promptitude as you think wise, and it will be a pure pleasure to me to see you again settled before I leave Aberdeen. Praying that God may guide you and the church with all wisdom and into all truth and peace,

"I am affectionately yours,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

The following letters describe the removal of the family to Bradford:

"*July*, 1877.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"The telegram would inform you that we had reached here all well. The train was late, but the children behaved splendidly. They were ready enough for dinner, and did it the most ample justice. It was fully half-past five before we reached the college, but thanks to your and Mrs. C——'s care dinner was soon on the table. The house was beautifully clean, the janitor's wife had done it and done it well. Mrs. C—— is greatly delighted with the place, thinks it indeed quite a palace. They are busy getting the bairns to bed and I, in a kind of idle moment, have hurried into the library to write this letter. Helen seems to have got over her sick turn. The ladies are discovering the use of the bath and other conveniences in the house. Cheer up, we shall soon see each other—either here or at Edinburgh."

"BRADFORD,

"*July*, 1877.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"We have been very busy to-day, and things are beginning to look quite orderly. The ladies have been working with might and main and to exalted purpose. Boxes have been unpacked, books arranged, and a good start made for to-morrow. We are all resting, very tired,

yet very much convinced that we can never do better than work, especially when it is done with a will. The house pleases the more the more it is inspected. We shall be very comfortable here so far as a home is concerned, and, I hope, in every other way.

"Dear mother, you will be downcast on the day you receive this. It is now a year since my father died. But do not think of him as dead—think of him as living, alive with God, another and a nobler life than we enjoy or he ever enjoyed here. And if we remember his death, let us also anticipate our meeting, certain that there comes to you and us all a time when death-divided friends meet to part no more."

## CHAPTER IV

### AIREDALE COLLEGE, BRADFORD, 1877–1886

AIREDALE COLLEGE, BRADFORD, like so many of the Congregational Theological colleges, was the direct descendant of one of the old Dissenting Academies. This was first formed in connection with the Upper Chapel at Idle, in Yorkshire, in the year 1800, under the care of a remarkable and erudite minister, Rev. W. Vint. In 1810 an Academy House was built; and in 1834 this house was exchanged for the newly erected Airedale College at Undercliffe, near Bradford. In the same year Mr. Vint died and was succeeded in the Principalship of the College by the Rev. Walter Scott,[1] a man of great energy and strength of character, whom Robert Hall described as "the Jonathan Edwards of modern times." Not content with his professorial work, Mr. Scott founded a chapel in Bradford and became its minister. In 1841 he had the college incorporated in London University by an order of the Queen in Council, though it is doubtful whether any of the students ever availed themselves of the privileges which this opened to them. During the twenty-two years of his Principalship Mr. Scott trained about eighty ministers and missionaries. In 1856 he retired through increasing age and infirmity and was succeeded, after a considerable interval, by one of his colleagues, the Rev. Daniel Fraser. During the interval efforts were made to amalgamate the two Yorkshire colleges, Airedale and Rotherham, but they came to nothing, though the project was not lost sight of. Dr. Fraser was a genial and able man, full of

[1] Father of Dr. Caleb Scott, for many years Principal of the Lancashire Independent College.

humour and quiet kindliness, who made friends of his students and set before them a high ideal of preaching and of the work of the ministry. The college prospered under his leadership. After a second attempt at amalgamation with Rotherham had failed, its supporters determined to set up a new building which should be more adapted to its growing requirements. A fine site was secured at Manningham, and the foundation-stone was laid on October 16, 1874. Before the building was ready Dr. Fraser resigned, feeling that the new circumstances required a new man, and one more in touch with the churches and their needs. The committee had some difficulty in finding such a man, but eventually their eyes turned to a young Aberdeen minister who had won for himself a reputation for theological learning.

It was in February, 1877, that Fairbairn was invited to succeed Dr. Fraser as Principal of Airedale College. He accepted the invitation not because his work in Aberdeen was in any sense completed or he himself dissatisfied with his position as a minister. He felt, however, that for many years past he had been more or less consciously preparing himself for the office of a theological teacher. He knew that he had here a function to fulfil and great ideals and ambitions which he was eager to carry out. He realised too that the Congregational churches, with which Airedale College was connected, would give him all the freedom and opportunity he needed, and his experience in the Evangelical Union had tended more and more to identify him with their polity and aims. The college, moreover, was in a favourable position for a new departure. Its fine buildings in Emm Lane, Bradford, were on the point of completion, and its committee was prepared to give the Principal a free hand in all matters relating to the curriculum and course of study.

Fairbairn removed with his family from Aberdeen in July, 1877, and at once took possession of the residence attached to the new buildings. He was greatly pleased

with the change, and writes to his mother full and glowing descriptions of the house and its surroundings. He began his work in the following September, but he had already made his first public appearance in his new capacity by giving the inaugural address at the opening of the college buildings in June. His subject was, "The Christian Ministry and its Preparatory Discipline," and it provided him with the opportunity of making a definite manifesto or programme, which is exceedingly interesting in view of the condition of theological study in Nonconformist colleges at the time and of the ideals which Fairbairn himself lived to carry out. He speaks of the ministry as above all things prophetic, and of preaching as the speech of a man who knows men speaking a veritable word of God in speech which those who hear can understand. But the prophet must have the tongue of him that is taught. He must go to the past as a learner, that he may be equipped to speak to the present in living tones. He must not, however, be a slave to the past nor accept what he is taught merely on authority. "The truths the past has transmitted we receive, not as traditions, but as truths; and we live less by faith in it than in the God who teaches and enlightens us as He taught and enlightened our fathers. The preacher who stands so related to the truth will be of the utmost use and significance in days like these: through the attitude of his own soul he will understand the people's and be able to create in others the reasonable faith he himself possesses." The function of the theological college is to enable the preacher so to know the truth and the age to which he has to preach that he may be a prophet indeed. Therefore the theology that is taught him must be interpreted in the widest possible sense as the science of God and of the universe and of their relations. To such a study both philosophy and history are ancillary. Science too is among its prolegomena, and must be suffered to speak of the things it knows. When the way has been thus prepared, Christian

theology proper starts with a knowledge of the sources, the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. Here Fairbairn urged, very characteristically, the necessity for a thorough knowledge of Greek, Hebrew, and the cognate languages. "The dearth of Hebrew scholarship in England is not creditable either to the English people or the English churches. They do not know the splendid wealth of the field they are so unwisely neglecting. When I think with what noble energy and to what splendid purpose these studies have been pursued on the Continent, I can only lament the hard necessities that hardly allow us even to garner their brilliant results." From this he went on to urge the necessity of systematic theology, of the comparative study of religions, of apologetics and of Christian ethics, and concluded by saying :

"The education which can make a man a theologian ought to make him much more. It ought to make him a man possessed of the divinest truths, acquainted with the holiest facts and persons, living to lift others into the sublime fellowship he himself enjoys. Nature and man are to him a divine speech which he has to interpret. His truths are not cold and abstract, but vital with eternal love, beautiful with eternal righteousness. They live and make him live : show him that he may show others the universe, in all its parts and elements, existing in the present and active and conscious God."

The address made a great impression, and won for the new Principal the instant appreciation and confidence of the Congregationalists of Yorkshire. One of his hearers said, "We have entered on a new dispensation," and his words were more true than he thought.

In entering on his work at Airedale, Fairbairn set himself resolutely to carry out the aims which this address embodied. The nine years spent in this work were all-important for his development both as thinker and teacher. He won valuable practical experience of the technique of theological teaching. He came to know the Congregational

churches, and obtained their full confidence, so that he was able to lead them in the direction he wished them to go. At that time the standard of education in their colleges was not very high, and the preparation in arts was especially inadequate. The older universities had only just been opened to Nonconformists, and for many reasons they had been prevented from using the opportunities available to them in London and in Scotland as fully as they might have done. It may be said, without injustice, that the outlook in the colleges was somewhat parochial; and though they had done good work under great disadvantages, it was obvious that they were capable of far greater things. It is only necessary to look round them to-day in order to realise how much they owe to the impulse which Fairbairn gave and to the example which he set. In almost all the Congregational Colleges there are teaching men whom he trained,[1] and their curricula have been largely modified in the direction which he indicated. The change which came over Airedale in his time seemed, as it were, to set the pace for a new order of things in theological colleges throughout the Free Churches of this land.

His colleague, Dr. Duff, writes thus of his work :

" When Fairbairn came to Airedale the training of the students in ' Arts,' i.e. in English, Classics, Mathematics, History, Philosophy, etc., was done, or supposed to be done, in our own class-rooms. Prof. Shearer and myself shared these studies and instructions so far as we could, in addition to our due theological teaching. To-day few persons can realise that such hopeless and helpless attempts at the training of ministers could be made, but then few persons realised the folly of the plan. Dr. Fairbairn's first

[1] e.g. Principal Garvie, Prof. Andrews, and Prof. Davies, at New and Hackney Colleges, London ; Principal Franks at Western College, Bristol; Principal Thatcher at Camden College, Sydney; Prof. Grieve and Dr. Pope at Airedale ; Principal Rees and Prof. Morgan Jones at Bangor ; Profs. Joseph Jones and Miall Edwards at Brecon ; and the whole staff at Mansfield, with one exception.

vigorous blows were aimed at the removal of that fatal system. He spoke of it in season and out of season. He pleaded with the governors; he lectured to the churches and the County Union. Within five years he had prevailed. We gave up the arts classes and sent all our men away to get their arts training at the universities."

Fairbairn started work with but two colleagues, Prof. W. F. Shearer and Prof. Archibald Duff, and about twenty-five students. He had behind him a loyal and amenable committee, but from the first he made it plain that he must be master in his own house and be suffered to go his own way. He was always a strict disciplinarian. On one occasion when he had taken summary action he afterwards reported it to his board. It was suggested by a certain important member that the Principal had perhaps done better to consult them first. He sprang to his feet, reports one who was present, fiery in face and in word, declaring that never would he for an hour preside over a college where such an act as his was not at once upheld. The matter was heard no more of. It may be imagined, however, that he was not always easy to work with. He had a grasp of detail and a swiftness of decision that made him impatient of slower minds. He had too a masterful way with him and a sense of power which led him to take sole responsibility where others thought it might have been shared. He was so sure of his own judgment, generally with very good reason, that he did not always stop to consult those who thought they had a right to be consulted. He could be high-handed and even imperious at times, and it would not be fair to conceal the fact that things did not always go smoothly between him and his colleagues, and that his action sometimes left a certain soreness behind it. At the same time it may be said that these things were but incidents, and that no colleague ever worked with Fairbairn who did not retain for him a lasting admiration and affection. His defects

in dealing with men were the defects of his qualities ; and even those who found him most difficult recognised that his qualities were so great as to cast the defects altogether into the shade. In his more personal relations with his fellow-workers he was kindly and considerate to a degree. When sickness or trouble arose he was the first to help, and would do so at any cost of personal inconvenience. He had that kind of genius for friendship which easily overrode all official relationships and considerations.

To his students Fairbairn showed himself at once a master and a friend. He could not tolerate idleness, pretension, or flippancy ; but given a man with some seriousness of purpose and a genuine desire to learn, he would place all his great powers at his disposal and count no sacrifice too great to help and guide him. He never forgot his own student days and difficulties, and for a man of his profound learning he had the most extraordinary faculty for entering into the mental condition and needs even of the dullest. He helped men too by expecting great things of them. Not for any man would he abate one jot of his ideal of what a fully equipped minister of the Gospel should be. His method and training were a challenge to all that was best in a man, and often brought out powers and capacities hitherto unsuspected. He had the greatest sympathy with those in doubt and theological difficulty, and though he would sometimes bear down upon them with a quite irresistible weight of argument, he would do it in so kindly a fashion that one was drawn along with it almost in spite of oneself. In the case of students accused of unorthodoxy in preaching he was generous and chivalrous to a degree. He could be stern enough in rebuke if a man spoke lightly and with an intention to offend. But if it were a case of a young man of progressive mind preaching before an ultra-orthodox congregation, Fairbairn spared no pains to win for him sympathy and understanding. On one occasion when an Airedale student was charged with preaching heresy in

regard to the Death of Christ, the Principal wrote to his accuser as follows :

" Mr. —— may have been rash and even unwise, but he was neither unscriptural nor heretical. He was even in the highest degree scriptural and orthodox. The sacrifice of Christ is always represented in scripture as a sacrifice *for* sin, His death as a death *for* sinners ; and what Mr. —— meant to affirm was the pure scriptural doctrine that the salvation of Christ was not simply and solely salvation from the legal pains and judicial penalties consequent on sin, but from the sin which is their cause. He did not mean to deny either that Hell was or that the Death of Christ saved from it, but he did mean to affirm that salvation from sin carried with it salvation from everything else, while a salvation from mere legal consequences which left the moral root and reality of sin undestroyed would be no salvation at all. His way of expressing himself may not have been the happiest possible, but he was a young man doing his best to speak without paper so as not to offend what was known to be one of the deepest susceptibilities of the —— people. And he was clearly entitled to a charitable interpretation, especially as the matter and purpose of his discourse were so sound and scriptural."

In his first year at Bradford Fairbairn was requested by some of the younger ministers of the neighbourhood to lecture to them on some theological questions. He wrote as follows to the Rev. H. Oakley, of Sheffield, through whom the request reached him :

" *August* 21, 1877.

" I have to apologise for my delay in answering your letter. But I wished to give your proposal—which I feel to be very flattering—my best consideration. It will be a great pleasure to me to be in any way useful to the younger ministers of the district, and I hope to have the opportunity now and then to be so. But there is meanwhile so much to do in connection with the reorganising of the college that I can hardly see how it would be possible,

at least at the beginning of the session, to conduct with full justice to all interests concerned an extra class. Yet it might be possible to reach the end you have in view in another way. I intend to conduct two classes—one dealing with the History and Words of Christ, the other with Philosophical and Historical Apologetics. The latter will be really (1) a course of Philosophical Theology, and (2) a course of Biblical Criticism. In each of the classes I hope to lecture on an average twice a week, and it might be so arranged that those ministers who wished might attend on lecture days, leaving the days intended for text books, examinations, and exercises to the students. I hope to issue a programme of the work intended to be done this session, and if so will send one which will enable you to judge whether what is now proposed will meet the end you have in view."

The arrangement which Fairbairn here suggests was duly made. A number of ministers attended his lectures, among them Dr. Forsyth, now Principal of Hackney College, who is remembered as having been most active in putting questions to the lecturer.

One of his most distinguished students at Airedale, the Rev. Herbert Stead, writes of his work :

"To Dr. Fairbairn's singular power as a teacher the passionate enthusiasm of every one of his students bears witness. It is difficult to analyse this power, for it seems to pervade the entire life of the student and is perhaps most potent where least suspected. Some clue may be furnished by the fact that those who have been trained under him and have learned to look up to him as one of the first theologians of the age love him far more than they admire. It is not the lucidity of his exposition or the extraordinary amount of knowledge he conveys in the compactest form, nor even the stimulus imparted by contact with an intelligence so quick, massive, and profound, which exercises the decisive influence over his men. It is rather the brooding interest, the fostering expectancy, the almost motherly sympathy by which he draws out all that is best in them. He never thinks of assuming 'the

great man' with his students—or for the matter of that with anybody. He encourages the frankest questioning, and has patiently submitted to a process of heckling on his lectures which a lesser man would not have endured for a moment. As some of his old students recall (not without a cold shudder at times) the freedom of discussion which he granted, and which they took to the full, they begin to understand how it is that the meekest of men are the makers of men and of nations. Dr. Fairbairn is more a maker than an instructor of men. He stamps every student with his own mark."

Another of his Airedale students, the Rev. Matthew Stanley, writes:

"The sermon class was always taken by Dr. Fairbairn, and was at once a terror and a joy. His appreciation of honest effort, however poor the result, was wonderful. I have known a man enter the class to give his sermon, despairing if he would ever become a preacher, and come out of it conscious that his sermon was very poor and yet somehow strengthened in the faith that one day he would have his place in the pulpit. But woe to any man who relied on decoration rather than substance. Slovenly thinking garnished with tawdry frippery Fairbairn could not abide. Still worse was it for a man when any shade of dishonesty appeared. One case only occurred in my time. As the culprit delivered the sermon we were at first charmed by the glowing ideas and by the nervous rhythmic language. He was a junior, and naturally we thought we had in him a budding poet preacher. As he went on an uncomfortable suspicion arose, and when he had finished the senior men who should have criticised were mostly silent. Then came Dr. Fairbairn, who began by bluntly asking where he got the sermon. Thus cornered he confessed. Fairbairn said nothing about the sermon, but poured on the man words which burnt like vitriol. A few days later he disappeared into the mountains of his native land.

"It is true to say that Fairbairn did more than any other man of our time, not only to raise the standard of ministerial scholarship, but to lift the conception of the

ministry altogether. To him it was an august calling. It demanded the most strenuous virtues, and must be undertaken by those only who were prepared to pay the price of absolute devotion. Ignorant dogmatism, superficial sentimentality, puerile and unworthy handling of the sacred Scriptures, dependence on pulpit helps, and every other substitute for hard work he could not endure. Upon them he poured torrents of burning, blistering scorn with such fierceness that the memory of his look and tone no years can efface. He made the ministry ideal. He awed and solemnised us by telling of its responsibilities ; he constrained us into willing service by describing its joys ; he taught us what the minister ought to be as a man of God among his people."

In 1878 Fairbairn received the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity [1] from his old University, Edinburgh. The honour was well deserved and greatly delighted him. He wrote of it to his mother :

" I may have a special mission to Edinburgh in about six weeks. It's possible you may have an addition to your family—even at your time of life. What say you to a Doctor—a full-blown D.D. ? But say nothing—it's a dead secret. I know it, you know it, but on your honour speak of it to nobody till the public prints make it known. It was sent me in absolute confidence, and I am blushing all over at making it known even to you."

His mother was present to see him capped, and her son used to tell with great glee how she had said, " If it had been Jamie now, it would ha been nae wonder, but who would ha thocht it of Andra ? " His brother James was an able and devout man who had made a great name for himself in Scotland as an evangelist. To the simple piety of the mother he seemed almost the greater man of the two.

[1] This was the first of many similar honours. Later on he was made D.D. of Yale, Wales, Manchester, and Göttingen, D.Litt. of Leeds, and LL.D. of Aberdeen.

*Photo : Albert Sachs*

PRINCIPAL OF AIREDALE COLLEGE

During Fairbairn's time at Airedale he was more than once tempted to take up other positions. Advances were made to him from New College, London, and from Andover Seminary, U.S.A. Both of these he declined without hesitation. In 1881, however, there came an invitation to return to Scotland which cost him much thought before he could arrive at a decision regarding it. This was from the Edinburgh Congregational Theological Hall to succeed Dr. Lindsay Alexander as first professor and Principal. There is no doubt that Fairbairn was greatly tempted by this proposal. Though the hall was not a large one, and was housed in inadequate premises, the fact that it was in Edinburgh counted for much. He was assured also that, if he accepted the Principalship, an effort would be made to provide a new building worthy of the Congregational churches in Scotland. He deliberated the matter long and carefully, but at last declined the invitation and wrote the following letter to the Airedale governors giving his reasons :

"AIREDALE COLLEGE, BRADFORD,

"*July* 18, 1881.

"DEAR MR. WILSON,

"As my mind has become as clear as it is ever likely to be relative to the invitation which has been presented to me to become Principal of the Theological Hall of the Scottish Congregational churches, I feel that further delay in communicating my decision would be as injurious to all concerned as it is unnecessary.

"I wish, then, to inform you, and through you the Governors and constituents of Airedale College, that I have determined to remain.

"I have been deeply touched by the kindness and delicacy with which the Governors have acted in this to me most critical and trying time, a delicacy by me felt even more in what they have forborne to do than in what they have both unitedly and individually said and done.

"Perhaps you will allow me to say to you, as I have said to our Scottish brethren, that the decision has been

reached through much perplexity, in much anxiety and pain, and only after the most prayerful deliberation. It has been to me throughout the most anxious and critical question of my public life. It has been considered and decided as in the presence of God. I have been powerfully drawn to Edinburgh. To live and study and teach there has been the great ambition of my life, and it was no small personal sacrifice to surrender the opportunity of doing so. Then, as our brethren thought I might be of service to the churches of our order in my native land, I could not but wish to be allowed to serve them in the high and honourable office to which I was called. I love the religious atmosphere of Scotland, it is so intense and earnest, and has in it so many elements of health and quickening and promise, and is so without the ecclesiastical shadows that make England so sad a land to the man who loves religious freedom and spiritual brotherhood. Indeed, you will permit me to say, that almost all my personal preferences, and all my literary plans and hopes, long cherished and deeply loved, urged me northward. But it was impossible that I could look at the matter altogether from one side, and that a side so largely personal. My present position had its claims. The more they were regarded the more imperative did I feel them to become. My relation to the Governors had been throughout most happy and cordial, and we had so worked together as to make the very thought of a separation painful. The radical changes that had been introduced, the re-organisation of the College that had been so happily and harmoniously carried through, made the notion of a departure before the new order of things was consolidated seem like an undoing of all that had been done. I felt, too, the claims of the students, many of whom represented that they had come here on my account. But the claims most deeply felt were those of Independency in England. It has had a splendid history; it has a noble present, a great work to do, perhaps in the face of modern tendencies, intellectual and ecclesiastical, the greatest work of any of the Free Churches in England; and it needs all, and more than all, the agencies and means it now possesses for doing it. I felt, after representations made to me from this district, and from far beyond it, that it would

not be dutiful to the highest and largest of all interests to leave my present post. And so I need not hesitate to confess that I stay in obedience to what conscience has showed me to be duty, though the confession will not be withheld, that even while duty is obeyed there remains a sad and deep longing after the churches of my Fatherland and the city I love above all the cities of the earth.

" I am anxious that the Governors and constituents of Airedale College should, at the earliest possible moment, know my decision, and so I send it to you that it may be communicated to them in any form that may seem to you the most suitable.

" Believe me, dear Mr. Wilson,

" Yours ever sincerely,

" J. S. Wilson, Esq. A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

The evident attraction of Edinburgh which this letter disclosed led some of the members of the committee of the Edinburgh Hall to the conclusion that they could probably secure Fairbairn if they gave him more time. They therefore approached him again in the year 1883. In the course of the negotiations, however, it appeared that one or two members of the committee had doubts regarding Fairbairn's orthodoxy on the question of the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. Articles of his were quoted in which he had expressed sympathy with German and Dutch liberal views, and one critic went so far as to make use of Fairbairn's confidential letters to a relative of his, since dead, written at a time when both were passing through a period of theological doubt and unrest. Fairbairn hotly resented the imputation this implied. What he had written had indeed represented a stage in his own theological development and had been intended to help one who was in danger of losing his Christian faith altogether :

" There is nothing I so much desire as to win the minds of men in this generation, permeated by its science and beset by the doubts it has awakened to a fair and earnest

consideration of the truth and claims of Christ, being certain that unless we obtain such consideration we can never secure their faith. And I cannot do anything to defeat this purpose or change an attitude that seems to me the most fruitful of good to all the interests concerned."

At the same time he would not admit that he had been in any way disloyal to fundamental Christian truth.

" Where I stand to-day is in great part known to the world; how I reached it, along what lines and through what conflicts is known only to God and to myself, and any profane person who tries to read into such traces of the way as circumstances may enable him to discover, his own meaning, does injustice all round. And it is against this injustice that I protest.

" I must be allowed to say—if I had not known myself to be in thorough loyalty—I will not say to the traditions of your Hall, for that I could not be, but to the Faith and Discipline, the order, doctrine, and polity of the Independent churches in Scotland—I would have absolutely declined to consider the invitation which was before given me on the ground of fundamental disqualification. I will not profess to have never moved or developed in theological views, but I will say what I have never allowed myself to say to any man before, that I stand to-day near the heart of the Reformed Theology as it was before the distinction of Calvinist and Arminian existed. In that theology I laboured in the later years of my ministry and have laboured all through my professorship, and I can say with proud humility as regards both, not without success."

In spite of the activity of a small group of men who tried to spread suspicion of his orthodoxy, the second invitation to Edinburgh was even more cordial and general than the first. Fairbairn declined it, largely against his own inclinations and not in any sense because of the theological difficulty that had arisen. He felt that the conditions of work at the Theological Hall were not such as to offer him the scope he needed. He doubted if the

Congregational churches of Scotland were strong enough to make their college what it ought to be. He was persuaded that there must be not only an adequate building, but provision for two or three professors beside himself if the work were to be well done, and he did not see where the necessary resources were to be found. He felt that he would not be justified in leaving Airedale, where his work was successful and well supported, unless he had before him a clear opportunity of doing for Scottish Congregationalism the kind of service which he felt the college ought to render.

In 1882 Fairbairn paid a holiday visit to St. Petersburg in company with his colleague Dr. Duff and the Rev. R. Westrope. He was in great spirits at the time, and prepared to enjoy everything and to enter with zest into the strange life of the new country. His letters home were full of fun, and full at the same time of a genuine homesickness which always followed him on his travels. The thought of wife and bairns was never far away from him. If he had letters, and knew that all was well, then all the day was bright. If not, it was hard to be cheerful and to keep going. The party travelled by a small cargo steamer, the *Hawthorn*, and, both coming and going, Fairbairn preached to the sailors and, as a result, had conversation with many of them on religious things. We must pass over his travel pictures, his delight in Russian tea, his disgust at Russian postal, police, and governmental methods generally, his descriptions of scenery, picture galleries, churches, and the like. One letter, however, may be quoted, as it contains a very characteristic passage:

"I went to see the —— Mr. ——'s friends. They are nice people, yet I felt humiliated that English people should be content to live and make money on such terms. They cannot get an English newspaper or magazine till it has passed through the censor's hands. On the table the June 'Fortnightly' was lying—a page plastered out with thick black ink because some critical reference had

been made to Russia. Then as they are dealt with as less than children, they deal with their work-people as worse than slaves. Their frontage is immenser than either Lister's or Saltaire ; but in handling the people what a contrast to Saltaire ! They house them in barracks, several families living in a single room. These barracks stand behind the mill, are as high as it, but not so long, lodging between two and three thousand work-people exclusive of children. I went into one of the rooms—two rows of bedsteads on either side standing very close together, an open space for cooking near the door, but no means of privacy, no inducement to cleanliness, all dismal and debasing. How health was preserved is a puzzle : the stench was such one could not remain in the room. The stairs which led up to these barracks have never known whitewash, and only at rare intervals, water. A few old women sat in the staircase windows sewing or knitting—all the other tenants, men, women, and children, except the very youngest, were at work. Again I say, I do not know how freeborn men consent to live and make fortunes under such conditions. It is humiliating. If the Russians know no better, the English do. I did come home a sad, almost a savage, man, tired, late for dinner, which I had to eat in solitude, meditating much on the new problem presented by the Englishman abroad."

While in St. Petersburg Fairbairn preached at the Congregational Church there and was greatly interested in the life of the little English community. But the absorbing interest of the visit was the condition of the Russian peasants and working people, not so familiar to Englishmen then as it has since become through the works of Tolstoi, Turgueniev, and Dostoieffsky. The party returned home by a rather larger steamer, the *Dago*. She carried a cargo of linseed which was so badly loaded that it shifted in a gale, and the boat nearly turned turtle. During the journey the Egyptian campaign was in progress, and Fairbairn's companions were amused at his eagerness for news on reaching London. No paper would satisfy him but the *Pall Mall Gazette*, and he said to

Dr. Duff, " Let men say what they like about the religion of John Morley, I feel I must always go to his paper to get the actual truth."

In 1885 Fairbairn visited Holland and Germany in company with Messrs. Thin and Munro, of Edinburgh, and his minister, Mr. Elder. Among other places they stayed at Leyden, Rotterdam, Brussels, Giessen, Arnheim, Bonn, Heidelberg, Leipsig, Jena, Cologne, and Berlin. For Fairbairn, much of the interest of the tour lay in meeting various scholars whom he had known previously or with whom he had had correspondence. In Holland he saw Professors Tiele and Chantepie de la Saussaye. The former he describes as " very worn and sad " because of the hopeless illness of his wife. At Giessen he met Prof. Harnack, who was there on a visit, and called on Kuno Fischer, " historian, philosopher, an interesting man, self-conscious, opinionative, self-possessed, about whom Harnack has told me some good stories. He has a great scar on his nose made in a duel." He also called on Hausrath and on David Strauss, who " lives in a beautiful house—one to whom we spoke of him called it a paradise, and so it is—but he suffers from decay of eyesight, a hopeless case. A beautiful home, young and bright family, splendid position, one of the foremost masters of German prose and theological science, but with eyesight and as a consequence power of work going, hoping and groping about for a cure which does not come. He has written a few stories under the name George Taylor. Last week I had heard de la Saussaye reproach him for turning aside from high science to novels, and now the whole thing stood explained. He said he could not read or use his eyes, so he had to close them and beguile the tedium of waiting for health by dictating to his wife his stories. Was not there a new lesson to patience and to love and charity ? "

" At Heidelberg," Fairbairn writes, " we found a copy of *The Times* on the hotel table. They were delighted at

finding a paper they could read, and M——, jealous of the national honour, at once enquired of the waiter, who could speak a little very broken English, 'Have you the *Scotsman* here?' '*Scotsman!* Was ist das? Whiskey?' The roar of laughter which followed stunned the poor waiter, and out of it laughter and puns without end have come."

From Leipsig he writes:

"We went on to Weimar, a city sacred to great names. Herder, Wieland, Schiller, Goethe here all lived, died, and were buried. Monuments and memorials of them are everywhere. Behind the city church is the parsonage where Herder lived and died, in the church is the pulpit where he preached and the tomb in which he is buried; before it is the monument which the Germans have erected to his name, with his favourite motto, 'Light, Life, Love,' inscribed on it. You will see a row of little volumes in the case between the fire and window in the dining-room: they are his books. He was the man who in a godless age did much to make people feel the value of religion in history, of the great religious persons, especially such as the Hebrew prophets and Christian apostles and the Master of whom they testified. It was indeed an inspiring moment to be there. We had a touch of the feeling of the pilgrim at the shrine. We saw the tombs of Schiller and Goethe, the houses where they lived, and in the case of the former the chamber where he worked and died. They are potent names to-day, yet they are but children of our century. When we are divided from them by three hundred and fifty years will they be what Luther is to-day, a name of power, a sort of invisible presence, met everywhere and associated with all that is truest and most tender in German life? I guess not; and the difference is that between the man of letters and the man of religion.

"One of the grim yet humorous things was our visit to the tombs. We were taken down into the vaults where the massive coffins stood—around them were the great iron and bronze coffins of the Dukes of Weimar, for the poets lie in the royal vaults, alone of mortals granted the honour of sleeping beside the little kinglets their last sleep.

Once we had seen the poets' tombs we turned to escape from the vaults, but the door was locked, and we had to hear the guide's funereal recital of the royal nobodies and their wives and children here granted immortality by association with the poets. The guide waxed quite eloquent in reproof of the impatience and impiety that would not visit and admire the splendid coffins which contained the royal remains."

*To his Mother.*

"*August*, 1885.

"It is long since I wrote to you from Germany, and many changes have come between then and this. The coming here as a student was perhaps the turning point in my life: it opened up a new world to me, new sources of knowledge, opportunities for study and friendships, and helped me to understand more of the mind and ways of man as well as of the truth and word of God. And now after eighteen years of hard work I have come back, but find everything changed, all my old friends gone, new friends indeed in abundance. But then I have not the old enthusiasm for study, and I wonder at the new fields of knowledge that are ever being opened up."

*To his Wife.*

"ROOSENDAAL,

"*August* 1, 1885.

"We had a splendid time in Leiden. Went on Wednesday to see Tiele; found him brilliant, suggestive, speaking admirable English. I said: 'The churches look large, bare, uncomfortable.' He replied: 'Calvinism is a very respectable religion, very good for men, but it is the ugliest of all religions.' Good, meant for buildings, but going much further. His sadness was great, for his wife and he had lived for and with each other. She must go, and no one remains behind—he a childless man. We went together to see Kuenen—a tall, massive man, with noble head and face. It was a study to look at him, and to hear him speak English. He was very tender in his reminiscences about Muir, whom he had, and with

cause, esteemed highly. He has a remarkably intimate knowledge of England and English parties. He took me to see Kern, the Sanscrit scholar, a little man, small, thin legs, large, disproportionate head, like a man quite overgrown in brain, with nothing beneath to support it. He is a sort of living Leaning Tower of Pisa, a kind of man you would like to prop up lest he fall entirely down. We had again talk concerning Muir, Kern saying that he was one of the greatest Sanscritists—perhaps the greatest of his day. Kuenen then took me round the city, and we went as far as the ancient walls ; saw the place where the section fell down and frightened away the Spaniards (see Motley). Then further and saw the place at which the ships entered, bringing relief. We talked on many things. He told me a thing I had not known before, that Muir had withdrawn from circulation the edition of Kuenen's *Profeten* (in English), to which he had contributed a preface, because he could not altogether agree with it. This, I think, shows that Muir had even more than I suspected returned to his earlier and simpler faith. All the while our other friends had been to Haarlem, where the music of a famous organ attracted Elder, and the fame of many flowers attracted Munro. . . ."

*To his Wife.*

"BONN,

"*August* 4, 1885.

". . . So soon as letters were got we went to the Cathedral (i.e. Cologne). The building is wonderful: begun 600 years ago, now only completed ; so large, it dwarfs all buildings beside it ; florid Gothic, double aisles on either side, loftiest roof I have seen ; view from entrance to apse magnificent, nothing to hinder it, but all open, with dim light from stained windows filling the whole place with mysterious awe. It was High Mass ; the vast place almost full of people, and whole army of priests and choristers engaged. The chanting and choral singing were splendid, no female voices, all men's and boys' ; the organ hardly ever heard, and the great building filled with sound, without ever being too near or too remote. The priests and choir made a procession round the church,

headed by the officiating priest, sprinkling holy water, singing as they went. The people opened to let them pass, and the old man moved with wonderful elegance and benignity. The service was then resumed and carried through ; it lasted till about 11 o'clock. We made our way back to our hotel, but found ourselves suddenly in the midst of a religious procession. First came priests bearing crosses, then young maidens dressed in white, singing and counting beads ; then women of all ages and classes, singing prayers and with their beads ; then boys from 6 to 16 years of age ; then more priests, crosses, holy water, and a great canopy, in the midst of which marched the principal priest, carrying in a vessel the Host or Sacred Bread. As it passed the people—now a great crowd—either uncovered or knelt down. To see them all so affected was very touching, and one could hardly resist joining. The old gentlemen were not with us. Mr. Elder uncovered ; but I, the only man who did so, stood with my hat on ; very sorry to do so, not wishing to hurt good people, but resolved, too, not to make profession of what I did not feel or believe. After Host came more priests ; then the men, a considerable multitude, who sang and chanted and looked very devout, one or two looking fierce as they saw me standing, the only covered form in the crowd. The streets which the procession had passed were all covered with leaves, which the people from the shops and houses had hastened to strew in its path. We then looked into an Old Catholic church, and heard a good sermon from a young man, who preached simply and earnestly to an attentive congregation.

"We spent the afternoon in our hotel. We all were very tired, and the rest refreshed us. In the evening we went out a little way into the country ; saw the manner of passing the afternoons and evenings of the Sunday, to the confirmation of our good friends in the love of the home Sabbath. The High Mass over, the people abandoned themselves to holiday-making ; flags were flying in every street, from almost every building ; in a great field all kinds of shows and amusements were going on ; and once this was finished the people trooped home, not always in a sober state. We all sighed for the quiet of home and the devotion of our own house of God.

"Yesterday we went early to the Cathedral and saw over it. It is famed as the shrine of the three kings—that is, the Magi who came with presents to the new-born Saviour. It is a splendid golden shrine, all set with precious stones, one an immense topaz, which burned with a remarkable light. The priest who showed us round assured us that the bones of the kings were within the shrine, and invited us to look into an aperture where their skulls could be seen. There we looked, but how these skulls were known to belong to the persons we were not told. Once miracles used to be performed there—now they happen no more. Indeed, we were a striking example of the difference between pilgrims ancient and modern. We were quite a large company of English; one was a lady interested in filigree work. She enquired—the priest instructed—the only miracles were those of workmanship, the only admiration not of the relics but of the cases that contained them. In addition to these precious bones and their still more precious covering we saw three of the thorns from the crown of the Lord, a piece of the Holy Cross, and three links of Peter's chain, all preserved in the most valuable way. In honour of, and over these, this great cathedral is built. . . ."

*To his Wife.*

"HEIDELBERG,

"*August* 7, 1885.

". . . We returned in the evening to Bonn, and I called to see Prof. Christlieb; good welcome, interesting talk, much real information as to German theology and universities. He was interested in Oxford scheme; had heard of it before; and was by no means prepossessed in its favour, because of the source whence he had heard, but I left him of different mind. Elder and I went out and heard lecture next morning—good lecture; it was refreshing to hear, but what pleased me most of all was the way in which I could follow it throughout. It was all thoroughly intelligible, more so to me than many an English one; and when I came out I could not help feeling how much it would have promoted my knowledge of the tongue if I had regularly been able to come over. We

then started for Coblenz ; had a magnificent sail on the Rhine for five hours ; passed castles and slopes covered with vines—no grand hills such as rise round our own Clyde, no soft azure in the sky such as often makes the West so wonderful, no magic light on hill and heather ; but all cultivated, rich, antique, with quaint towns and curious gable-shaped houses clustering at mouths of valleys and in foot of hills. The steamboat was like a section of England suddenly cut adrift—so many English on board. A young lady hovered round us awhile. Mr. Elder saw she had the Bradford look, and I spoke to her. She turned out to be James Hanson's daughter, travelling with the German mistress from Saltaire, and going on to Jena. Once I sat down beside what seemed an English cleric ; he opened speech about Rhine, etc. By and by he said : ' Do you know Dr. Murray ? ' I : ' Why do you think I should know Dr. M. ? ' He : ' Oh ! I supposed you would know him.' I : ' But why do you suppose I should know him ? ' He : ' Oh ! I heard a lady on board mention your name ! ' That changed the matter, and we talked pleasantly enough—he turning out to be the Vicar of Mill Hill, a goodish man, no very strong one. We reached Coblenz about 3.30 ; went to see Fortress Ehrenbreitstein, and Thin had the pleasure of paying 7s. for a cab which he had had for only one hour. Returning to town, we wandered through it, but found the smells so abominable that we were glad to escape. We rose next morning at 5.30 and started anew on our sail. We went up the Rhine, sailing till 3.30. It was glorious, more beautiful than on the previous day. We had a succession of castles, ruins, villages, and everywhere between, running far up the hills, vineyards. We had no English on board, but I struck up acquaintance with Germans and found my speech on the whole wonderfully successful. We passed Bingen on the Rhine, and it made me think of home, and tell my German friends of the little daughters I had there and loved very much. We reached Mainz at 3.30, hired a cab, drove through the city, saw a good deal of it, and departed at 4.30. The trains were all late ; they fastened our carriage to a slow train, and we did not reach here till almost 9 o'clock—we ought to have been at 6.45. You may guess how tired we were. . . ."

Soon after his settlement in Bradford Fairbairn began to do there what he had done so successfully in Aberdeen, in the way of giving popular lectures in defence and explication of the Christian religion. But the circumstances of the place and the very different type of audience he had to face necessitated a different range and choice of subject. In Aberdeen he could address himself to students and educated men, and he naturally dealt with the kind of difficulties most keenly felt in such circles. But in a great manufacturing centre like Bradford he found himself in contact with shrewd and hard-headed artisans, and was compelled to reckon with a good deal of more or less ignorant prejudice against the Christian religion and the Christian church. This gave him ample scope for all his powers of exposition and persuasion, and, in the opinion of those best able to judge, he rose to the occasion with extraordinary success. As early as the year 1877 he delivered in Horton Lane Chapel a course of lectures on "Faith and Modern Free Thought." These called forth a reply from Mr. Bradlaugh, and led to a challenge from the Bradford branch of the National Secular Society to a public debate with him on the subject. Fairbairn's reply to this invitation was characteristic. He wrote to the secretary of the society:

"AIREDALE COLLEGE,

"DEAR SIR, "*December* 17, 1877.

"I have received and carefully considered your letter of the 13th, and have now respectfully but decisively to decline to accede to the proposal made in it. I decline simply in the interests of truth. No man who both understood and loved the truth would imagine that it could be either sought or found in such a debate as you propose, or would consent to any attempt to determine its nature and claims in a manner so silly and inadequate.

"I have no desire to withdraw from discussion any truth of religion in general or Christianity in particular, whether recorded as a fact or formulated as a doctrine;

but I wish to see them discussed by thoroughly competent persons before thoroughly competent tribunals. The critical and philosophical questions connected with the origin and meaning of Christianity are being discussed by eminently qualified scholars and thinkers here and especially on the Continent; and I, for one, am most anxious that the real and simple truth should be discovered and declared. But it can be discovered only by the calm and patient investigation of many students and the discussion by men of scientific spirit, culture, and aims, of every dubious question that in the process of such investigations may emerge. It were simply an insult alike to the truth and the pursuit of the truth that two men should condescend to discuss such subjects in the heated atmosphere of a public platform or the hardly less heated columns of a public newspaper, and before an audience that the utmost generosity could not credit with the right that comes of competence to adjudicate on the matters in dispute.

"I am not in any way questioning your right to express and advocate your own views. Far from it. That right you have, and are at liberty to exercise. Were it challenged or denied I would be prepared publicly to vindicate it. I only claim to possess and to exercise a similar right. For years I have sought the truth and am seeking it still. The search has been, and is, toilsome. What I have found, how it was found, and why I believe it to be true and the truth, I feel under obligation to state when opportunity offers by tongue or pen. What has been or may be said every man has the right to criticise, and is free to exercise his right. But whether I shall recognise his claim to be a competent critic, or the competency of his audience to judge either as to the relevancy or the justice of his criticisms, is an altogether different matter. It is impossible to refute ignorance, or what is even worse, the got-up knowledge that has neither the spirit, nor the method, nor the aims of science, and it is as impossible to convince it. There could not be given more conclusive evidence than your proposal supplies, that you do not as yet the least understand either the problems involved, or the only method or process that has promise of solution. You will understand that I do not object to the proposal

simply because it is yours, or that of the Society you represent. I object to the thing proposed, and would do so in any circumstances and from whatever quarter it came. It is opposed to every conception of scientific method, to every condition of scientific work. It would be to my mind as absurd and childish, as little conducive to the interests of truth and science, if it were proposed to be done in the supposed interests of Christianity by a Christian Evidence Society, as it is when proposed by yours in behalf of the interests you have in view.

" I remain,

" Yours sincerely,

" A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

It may be imagined that this reply was not very satisfactory to the secularists. A lively correspondence ensued in which Fairbairn was charged with arrogance, cowardice, and evasion. But he would not be moved from his determination to do his work in his own way and to give his testimony how and when he thought best. He was greatly impressed with the keenness, intelligence, and zeal for knowledge of the working men with whom he came into contact at Bradford, and he spared himself no pains in order to help them. Throughout his life he retained the conviction that a preacher could have no better audience than was to be found among the working classes, and he always gave them of his best. Nothing pleased him more than the real success of his efforts in this direction, and when some of the more orthodox spirits in the churches chided him for giving apologetic lectures rather than preaching " the simple Gospel " he defended himself with a passion of indignation. To one of his critics he wrote :

" I know what I do as you cannot possibly know it, and I am doing it with a full sense of my responsibilities to my Saviour, His truth, and His church, and to my brother men. I know from the most direct personal testimony that I have disposed many to listen to the

Gospel who could not before have been got to give it a patient hearing."

Work of this kind culminated in the series of addresses delivered in 1884 under the title, "Religion in History and in Modern Life." These were afterwards published, and in the preface to the first edition Fairbairn writes :

"The reasons which induced me to take so unusual a step had a twofold source : first the strong conviction of what Religion is and what it ought to do ; and secondly the feeling that it is the duty of the special student to become, as far as possible, a teacher of the people, especially in matters where the people so much need instruction and where instruction is so necessary to their highest good. Our hard-worked ministers and clergy have quite enough to do without attempting labour of this kind, yet it is labour that ought to be done. The ordinary pulpit leaves many questions undiscussed, and the ordinary congregation does not desire or require their discussion : yet they are questions everywhere anxiously debated by earnest and most excellent men. It is easy through the press to reach the cultivated and leisured classes : it is not so easy, indeed to many it is quite impossible, to reach the industrial classes through it. Yet these latter are often the more susceptible, with natures more open to conviction, more fully convinced, if convinced at all. Some things that happened recently within my own experience made me very vividly aware of the peculiar forms our religious problems and difficulties assume among our working men, and this discovery led to the feeling of obligation that resulted in the delivery of these lectures. I felt bound, as a student and teacher of the Christian religion, to speak to my fellow-townsmen, especially those of the industrial classes, concerning questions they were discussing and honestly trying to understand."

These lectures were very warmly welcomed both when delivered and published. They have passed through eight editions, to the fourth of which was appended a lecture originally delivered in Oxford on "The Church and

the Working Classes." In this the writer discusses the burning question of the alienation of the working classes from organised religion, showing that it is alienation from the Church rather than from religion itself. He makes too some practical suggestions for its removal which, adapted to modern conditions and rigorously carried out, would in all probability still be effective. The lectures themselves were among the best that Fairbairn ever delivered. Into them is packed the fruit of years of study, yet the material is so skilfully handled and the argument is marshalled with such care that the reader never loses himself, and is hardly conscious of the effort being demanded of him. They contain passages of real and moving eloquence, and the tone throughout is frank and candid. The subject is one that Fairbairn had made peculiarly his own, and in dealing with it he is altogether at home. Judged by the standard and conditions of the time at which they were delivered, the lectures are a fine example of what such work should be. They give the best possible defence of Christianity, by showing what it is and what it has done. They make the highest claims for the Christian spirit and base them on its grand historical manifestations. It is in the application of Christian principles to the varied needs and circumstances of men, social, economic, and religious, that the lecturer grounds his hope for the future. He sums it all up thus :

" When I look abroad and see the disintegrative agencies that are hard at work, the one thing I am anxious to do is to bring the great constructive, the great architectonic principles of our Christian faith into relation with life and action. Every Christian principle embodied in law or society, every Christian deed accomplished in industry helps on the happier time. . . . I have endeavoured to show you the principles which have done most for humanity in the past, and to make manifest to you that if in this living present we are to have real and highest welfare, a wealthier state, and wealthier men, because men who have realised their manhood's highest state

and truest weal, then we must be men more and more baptised into Christ, possessed of His truth, inspired by His love. Then when so inspired, working the work of time as in eternity, building on this earth a city, meant to be the great city of God, we shall hand on to a brightening future the nearer fulfilment of the promise which came to the ages through Jesus Christ our Lord." [1]

In addition to these lectures Fairbairn published during the time that he was in Bradford two other books. One, *Studies in the Life of Christ*, first appeared as a series of lectures in Aberdeen, then as articles in the *Expositor*, and was issued in book form in 1880. Between that time and 1907 it passed through fourteen editions, and was translated into Dutch by his friend Chantepie de la Saussaye. The other, *The City of God*, a series of Discussions in Religion, was issued in 1883, passed through eight editions, was translated into Dutch by Van der Brugghen, and into French by Gustave Roux. The first of these books was perhaps the most popular of all his writings. It appeared at a time when men's minds were beginning to be exercised in this country by the problem of the historical Person of Jesus Christ, and it offered them at least a tentative and temporary solution. To the author the book was an attempt "at orientation," an effort to reach a point of view from which the Life of Christ could be studied and construed. The work of Strauss and Renan is always in the back of his mind, and he sets himself deliberately to undermine the naturalistic position and to substitute for it something which he considers to be at once more historical and more truly rational. He finds in Jesus Christ something more than a product of the conditions of His age, the last fruit of the old tree of Judaism. He is rather the first fruits of the new time, Himself an original and productive force. Thus both His Person and work are supernatural and cannot be rightly

[1] *Religion in History and in Modern Life*, p. 270.

studied save in relation to those divine ends they are intended to serve.

"The greatest problems in the field of history centre in the person and life of Christ. Who He was, what He was, how and why He came to be it, are questions that have not lost and will not lose their interest for us and for mankind. For the problems that centre in Jesus have this peculiarity: they are not individual but general—concern not a person but the world. How we are to judge Him is not simply a curious point for historical criticism but a vital matter for religion. Jesus Christ is the most powerful spiritual force that ever operated for good on and in humanity. He is to-day what He has been for centuries—an object of reverence and love to the good, the cause of remorse and change, penitence and hope to the bad: of moral strength to the morally weak, of inspiration to the despondent, consolation to the desolate, and cheer to the dying. He has created the typical virtues and moral ambitions of civilised men, has been to the benevolent a motive to beneficence, to the selfish a persuasion to self-forgetful obedience, and has become the living ideal that has steadied and raised, awed and guided youth, braced and ennobled manhood, mellowed and beautified age. In Him the Christian ages have seen the manifested God, the Eternal living in time, the Infinite within the limits of humanity; and their faith has glorified His sufferings into a sacrifice by the Creator for the creature, His death into an atonement for human sin. No other life has done such work, no other person been made to bear such transcendent and mysterious meanings."

From the standpoint thus indicated Fairbairn proceeds to discuss the Life of Christ in its main outlines. He deals with the historical conditions of His age, His birth, boyhood, and training, His relations with John the Baptist, His teaching, His disciples, His miracles, His Death and Resurrection. On all of these things he has much to say that is fresh and illuminating, and it is quite easy to understand how the book met a very real need. It appeals directly to

the mental attitude of the average Christian of the time, and easily wins his favourable verdict. But the book may fairly be regarded as little more than a collection of material for later use and as the practical exposition of a method. It sets the historical Jesus in the place which the writer wishes Him to occupy in the Christian system, and makes Him determinative both for Christian thought and life. To this extent it may be said to have a permanent value and to lay down lines which it may still be wise to follow. But in all other respects it has long since been superseded. The advances in New Testament criticism in modern times have made great changes in the materials available for framing a Christology, while the formulation of the doctrine itself has been profoundly modified by the new psychological and experimental tendencies of the modern mind. At the same time Fairbairn was making his contribution to a building which other hands were to complete. The stress he laid on the centrality of the doctrine of the Person of Christ, and on its regulative and illuminative function in Christian theology, rendered a real service that was independent of the particular historical interpretation which he gave to the Person. It is also characteristic that Fairbairn's treatment of the subject is quite as much religious and sermonic, as critical and exegetical. It is more genuinely constructive perhaps than any other of his books, and in this respect set an example which was much needed at the time at which he wrote.

The second of the two books we have named, *The City of God*, is of a different kind, but serves much the same ends. It consists of a number of addresses and sermons so grouped as to give to the whole a certain homogeneity. The first part deals with Faith and Modern Thought, Theism and Science, Man and Religion. The second with God and Israel, The Problem of Job, Man and God. The third with The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith, Christ in History, The Riches of Christ's Poverty. The

fourth with The Quest of the Chief Good, and The City of God.

The book is extremely interesting for more than one reason. In the first place it contains examples of Fairbairn's sermons when he was at his best as a preacher. Of these a certain reviewer wrote :

" Dr. Fairbairn has had the courage and the power to revive what was imagined to have ceased for ever—the great sermon, the oration. Massive, thought-crammed, ornate sermons, moving on with a majestic sweep, were supposed to have gone out of date altogether, but such sermons are still possible and are still popular when the right kind of man appears to produce them. When the massive sermon is white hot with conviction and enthusiasm, it is still the grand style, and will find a heartier general reception than the sermonettes and meditations and jerky smart essays which pass current for sermons in these days. Conviction, enthusiasm, however, are just the qualities which often seem wanting in theological prelections. One of the most delighful characteristics of our author's tone in this volume is the radiant cheerfulness, the almost buoyant and sanguine confidence with which he feels that the future belongs entirely to the faith which he champions and expounds."

This is all true, but it means that the book so produced has certain inevitable defects. It deals with great subjects, but its treatment of them is that of the pulpit rather than of the study. It is great preaching, but it is preaching all the same. Again we have a collection of materials for future elaboration, rather than anything in the nature of a finished work.

Further, it should be noted that this book deals with, or at least raises, all the questions with which Fairbairn was specially concerned, and is therefore of unusual value for the history of his mental development. In the first part we find his familiar apologetic in its more philosophical form, aggressive rather than defensive, positive rather than critical. He addresses himself directly to

the confusion and hesitancy of mind which was then so common among thoughtful Christian people, and had been largely brought about by the work of Darwin, Huxley, and Spencer. As over against the naturalistic view of the universe for which they stood, he pleads forcibly and eloquently enough for the theism which finds in a God at once transcendent and immanent the cause and sustainer of all things. He argues that "Evolution, in making the doctrine of the Divine immanence a necessity to our idea of Nature, has made the doctrine of the Divine presence a new reality in religion and a new inspiration for the soul." [1] He is not concerned to "reconcile" science and theology. He knows that there is a place and function for both of them, and that each needs the other in order to do its perfect work. But he is concerned to argue for the priority of mind in the universe and for a conception of things which finds their origin not in blind force, but in an intelligent and beneficent God.

Turning to religion, he uses to good purpose his study of the religions of the world in arguing from them that religion is natural to man, and the capacity for religion his universal characteristic. He quotes Hegel's dictum: "All peoples know that the religious consciousness is that wherein they possess the truth: and religion they have ever regarded as their true dignity and the Sabbath of their life" [2]; and goes on to show how, of all the forces that make for human progress, religion at its highest is the most potent. He is very scornful of the eighteenth-century idea of the "religion of Nature," and of rationalist substitutes for religion generally. What he says of Strauss may be taken as typical of his line of argument:

"David Strauss, in the book that formed so fitting a crown to his tragic career, tried to build on the foundation of our modern physicism a new faith that should supplant the old. To him the universe—the great whole which

[1] *City of God*, 2nd. ed., p. 57.
[2] *City of God*, p. 84.

comprehends and unifies all forces—became the only God. In it there was no room for a personal deity, but only for an impersonal and person-creating all. Before this universe man was to bow, not in dumb resignation but in loving trustfulness. Yet man can only love the good and trust the right, and so Strauss had to invest his universe with the qualities of order and love, reason and goodness. While it ceased to be the work of an absolutely reasonable and good personality, it became the workshop of the reasonable and the good. But what are reason and benevolence, righteousness and goodness ? Not qualities of an impersonal energy, but of personal will, not attributes of an almighty force, but of a living spirit. The rational is the conscious : the silent force moving inevitably to its end is not the benevolent, can be as little touched with pity as fired by revenge. These qualities, then, of reason and righteousness, benevolence and truth, came not from the impersonal all but from the personal deity. We cannot spare the attributes and slay the person. Under the name of these Divine qualities, in spite of his brave denials, God victoriously entered the universe of Strauss, so making the very negations of man to praise Him." [1]

The argument of the book culminates in the chapter entitled, " The Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith." The question raised by it has become very familiar in these days, and Fairbairn's treatment of it is undoubtedly antiquated in form. But in principle and substance his reasoning is perfectly sound ; and when the dust raised by modern critical enquiry has died down, we shall probably find ourselves not very far away from the positions which he reached. His words will still bear reading, and should have all the credit of the effect they produced in reassuring many in a time of great stress, in leading them out into an ampler faith, and in making it possible for them to dedicate themselves to the service of God and man.

Between the years 1878–82 Fairbairn was Muir lecturer in the Science of Religion at the University of Edinburgh.

[1] *City of God*, pp. 91–2.

This lectureship was founded by his friend Dr. John Muir, as one of his many benefactions to the University, and it was to him a pleasing and altogether fitting thing that Fairbairn should be the first lecturer. To Fairbairn it provided a welcome opportunity of gathering up the results of his long study of the religions of the world, and the lectures would no doubt have formed the material part of the book on comparative religion which in later years he projected but was never able to complete. They comprised a survey and comparison of all the great religions of the world outside Christianity, and the account given of them was as complete as the materials then available would allow. We have already spoken of Fairbairn's work in this particular department. Here it will be sufficient to add that he never fell into the common error of interpreting the higher religions by the lower, and never lost sight of the fact that the study of comparative religion has a positive and genuinely apologetic value of its own. He was interested in it as a theologian, rather than as an historian or scientist, and if his work has not the teaching value of that done by later students of the subject, he never carried it on in isolation from his theology, but used it always to win for religion a new respect, and to derive from it a wider understanding of the ways of God.

The following extracts from letters to his mother may serve to throw light on his mind and home life while at Bradford :

" *September*, 1879.

" We do not like to think of you as anxious over much. There is care enough in us all, but the best thing is to know that the Heart that made us is a Heart that cares for us, and no hair of our head can fall to the ground without His knowledge. Now cheer up and look up ; and for us, wherever we are, all things shall work together for good."

" *December*, 1879.

" John is now almost quite well. But it will be long before he is as strong as we would like him to be. The

holidays have commenced and all the children are back from school. It is pleasant to have them so, especially as they help to cheer John. Jeanie is suffering from her long confinement to the house and the room from which she has never been long absent since John took ill, but now is comparatively free. The College breaks up for the holidays on Tuesday, and I am very glad, as it will enable me to give myself wholly to work for Edinburgh. The lectures [1] do not last long in giving, but they take a long time in preparing, though the preparation is itself a pleasure.

"I sent my book to Mr. Gladstone as an expression of gratitude for the work he had done in Scotland. I asked him not to write, as he had so many claims on his time. But he sent me a long and most gratifying letter, which, if I recollect, I will bring with me and show you.

"I do not know that I ever felt better or happier in the midst of hard work or felt it agreeing better with me. I was so sorry to hear you had been confined to your room. Do take care of yourself. John Frost is as hard on old folks as on young ones: in various senses we are twice bairns."

"*May*, 1880.

"The children have now the Whitsuntide holidays, which last a fortnight. I do wish we had some place to send the boys to near at hand, but indeed they could hardly be better than they are here. John now seems quite strong, as strong as ever he was, which, of course, is not saying very much.

"We have failed to get a house for July and August, and so have given up the notion of going before August. But I have arranged to go instead for an excursion in Wales, doing a little on Sundays—as much as will defray our expenses, which is ever a consideration. On my return we shall go with the family to quarters somewhere. The work has been going on very well. There has been nothing very special since I was at Huddersfield. The usual tale of work, which I am making as light as possible till after the holidays.

"Jeanie has not been up to the mark, ill, I suppose,

[1] The Muir lectures.

with the serious disease which ever attends spring cleaning—the usual symptoms being a somewhat flat and piteous look, an irritable temper, and a general tendency to believe that the world is about as far wrong as the house. Happily the house is getting right, and everything else is mending, including health and appearance."

"PORT STEWART,

"*August*, 1880.

"You will be wondering how we are faring in this outlandish place. You may wonder; but then I have wandered so much, that our going to one out-of-the-way place more or less can matter but little. 'He was aie a restless laddie, and he'll no let other folk rest; and now he's off to Ireland o' a' places in the world wi wife and bairns. I wish we saw them a' safe back again.' Now, is not this what you have been thinking? You may as well confess your sins, or rather you don't need to confess them, I know them all.

"Well, this is a most beautiful part of the world. The sea that comes into the bay is the broad Altantic, and all the time we have been here it has been lying in beautiful sunlight round the shore. Rocks wild and terrible rise up at parts, and a little further on is a long stretch of sand on which the Atlantic waves break in measured succession and with a thundering noise. There the children love to play and gather shells, and we love to help and watch them, which we do dreaming of the time when we were boys and you and father watched us play, or sent us out from among your feet that you might be the freer to work. It is all very pleasant—beautiful too—and is laying up for us and our children memories that never die.

"And now, how I wish you had been here. It would have made our holidays perfect, but we needed the want to make us feel dissatisfied and incomplete.

"Be you cheerful, keep up heart and hope. I know what has happened. Let S—— face the worst and honestly accept it, and the best will soon begin to come. While he has head and hands he need not despond or feel beaten. I wish it had been possible for me to be with you, but it cannot be. What is infinitely better—God is—and where He is all is well."

In 1880 Fairbairn had a severe attack of gall stones, a complaint which troubled him frequently during the next few years. It was aggravated by his persistence in working even when he was in great pain. He consulted Dr. (now Sir) Clifford Allbutt and was compelled to take things more easily. He writes to his mother again :

"*November*, 1880.

"I have been improving wonderfully and seem to have got rid finally of those dreadful pains which for some time past have been the torment of my life. I can now look forward to coming to Edinburgh with pleasure, while before the very notion of the work necessary almost alarmed me. I have got an appetite which is most refreshing, and can at the table perform quite remarkable feats. So the birthday has come with cheer, and I write to you that you may rejoice in our joy.

"The book [1] which I am publishing ought to be out by the end of the month. I think you will like it and be able to read it with profit. You will get a copy from the author—one of the earliest—and you will be sure to tell me whether it has anything of interest in it for you."

"*November*, 1881.

"Many thanks for the beautiful card which came on my birthday. It was most welcome, and Maggie's kind and sisterly letter. You would have heard from me by return but unluckily it found me in bed, with nothing serious, only a sore throat and bad cold caught at Dr. Mellor's [2] funeral on the Saturday before. However, I was up the same afternoon and present at a meeting in College, where the students presented me with a beautiful time-piece for the study and with two ornaments to match. I was never more surprised in my life, but the young fellows had done right nobly, and so I had to make a speech—a good long one—considering the bad throat. You came in for a brief remembrance, as you

[1] *Studies in the Life of Christ.*

[2] Dr. Enoch Mellor, Minister of Square Congregational Church, Halifax.

always do on such occasions. The presentation was a thank-offering for my not going to Edinburgh.

"The College is prospering. They have raised between £6000 and £7000 for the debt, and will raise the whole £9000 before long."

"*February*, 1882.

"I am giving lectures every Tuesday to very large audiences. The Hall being crowded, the people are all quite agog about the subjects."

"*April*, 1882.

"You would be half expecting me to come to Muir's funeral, but I could not leave home, intending as I do to be so soon in Scotland. Good old man; he was a good friend to me—the best I ever had in the world. I mourn him deeply, but he is certainly resting from his labours. He has not been able for long to write much, only a feeble line now and then."

"*May*, 1882.

"I was in London for rather over a week, living with Mr. Spicer.[1] You would notice that they had elected me to the Chair of the Congregational Union. I was rather disappointed, being wishful to be left as much as possible to myself and my work at home just now. If I had two pairs of hands and two sets of brains I could keep both fully employed, and so it is rather burdensome to be called away from one's favourite work to more public duties. But honours must be accepted, and it is no small honour to have won the Chair of the Union within five years of my coming into England."

"*November*, 1882.

"I am sure you have been saying this long while, 'Why is that laddie never writing?' and he has been saying, 'You must write to your mother.' Well, only yesterday I wrote the last line of my new book,[2] and very weary of the pen did my fingers feel. Now to-day I write the first thing after it—a letter to you, certain you want it and desire it. College work goes on happily, men doing well, all as busy as can be. . . . Now, you'll say, 'He's told us nothing.' What is a man to do who has nothing to tell? All his brains have gone into his book."

[1] Mr. Henry Spicer, of Highbury, a very close friend.
[2] *The City of God.*

" *November*, 1883.

" So another birthday is about over—rather a sad time as one begins to get to middle life and beyond—more birthdays now behind than there can be before. Yet God is good—life is useful, and surely we are in hands that make all things well. How did you like the Sheffield address ? [1] Everybody has been more than kind. No word I ever did speak has been so commended and praised.

" Dear mother, my work is not easy. Sometimes it seems more than I can do, but the strength always comes. You used to say I was always a contented boy. So I was with what was done for me. I never complained, but the contentment did not mean neglect of duty, but rather labour continued right on. I was pleased with my very small beginning at Bathgate—was very rich then in thought and hope, lived as I live now, trusted God, did what was dutiful, and He has always provided. And so shall He to the end. I am coming to see you at the new year. I have to preach to the medical students in the U. P. Synod Hall on the second Sunday in January, so shall be there."

" *December*, 1883.

" In the College things are going on very much as usual, all active, all diligent, and all contented. Dr. Simon, of Birmingham, is going to Edinburgh. I hope he may be successful. He is a very fine fellow, very anxious to do well, and will do his best."

" *October*, 1884.

" I have had a very busy time since coming home (from America). I have not, indeed, known rest even for a single day. I have been to Scarborough to one ordination, to Rochdale for a second, and Bacup at a third, and this week I go to Leicester to a fourth. These are all students who have been settled, and it keeps me very busy and allows little time for home duties or study."

" *December*, 1884.

" Last Sunday I was at Newcastle—very cold journey —snow heavy here, there too, but on the whole enjoyed the trip. Sunday before was at Cambridge, saw many

[1] Chairman's address before the Congregational Union.

friends—like to visit young men at University, and get right good welcome from them. Dr. Campbell, minister here, has just died suddenly. He used to be in Albany Street, was there before Dr. Pulsford, had been here thirty years, and was quite an old man. He lived alone—all his children married and settled away from him.

"So Sir Alexander Grant has died suddenly too. He did not take good care of himself; if he had, he might have lived longer. Don't know who will succeed him; anyhow it won't affect me; here in England it is my interest now to remain. Providence points that way. Have much to do; must try to do it. I often take a long and sad look home—but clearly my duty is here. All will be happy while duty is done."

"*March*, 1885.

"I am going to give you a bit of news—an invitation to become Principal of a College which is to be established at Oxford. This is a great honour, but it would involve heavy obligations. . . . The College to be removed is Springhill, Birmingham, and acceptance would involve our going there for a time, at least probably would—say for a year—which is one of the difficulties of the situation. A deputation is coming to see me, and I don't know anything certain till it comes, and you must keep the affair secret till they publish it. It must not be allowed to get out from me, and our people here must not be bothered by rumours from outside. Indeed my main difficulty relates to our own College. I feel hardly able to leave it—everything has been made so pleasant and happy. . . . Yet to go to Oxford is an extraordinary temptation, and to establish a school there and make it what a school for our Free Churches ought to be, is to attempt a work worth the best ambition of any man."

"*October*, 1885.

"I am now fairly 'loosened' as they say in Scotland, from my charge here: all men know I go. The Governors have been very good and kind—have indeed behaved as they have always done, handsomely and magnanimously—remonstrated while they thought they could hinder my going, then said, 'Bless you, and God speed your work if you go.' This will involve me in a lot of hard work, but

I hope to get through. Just now I am busy with various things: a reply to Cardinal Newman, which, I think, will not gratify either that gentleman or his admirers; a new course of lectures for the College here; a paper for the Congregational Union, and other things too numerous to mention. Yet I hope to have a quiet hour or two by and by, when I come to see you and hear all the tales of home."

"*November* 8, 1885.

". . . I am as usual up to the lips in things to be done; busy at home with reply to Newman, which I hope to be out of hand by the end of the week—indeed, though it is far from finished, it must be so to appear next month. Then the Oxford business brings many burdens. On Friday, October 30, I left for Birmingham, met the new committee, had long and interesting interview, and got to understand the new sort of men I must henceforth work with. On Saturday went on to Oxford; lunched with the Vice-Chancellor of the University, with whom I had a long and interesting talk over our new project; dined in the evening with Prof. Bryce, and addressed a meeting of students and friends in one of the College halls. On Sunday had a very busy day, meeting many men, and dining with dons, who were very kind to me in view of early settlement in their midst. On Monday I went to attend the meeting in London; remained to another on Tuesday evening, all connected with said scheme, and got home on Wednesday very tired, to work at College. All here very sorry at our going, but the feeling is that we have done our duty—no blame is given, only if the venture is to be, unanimous feeling is that it cannot be placed in other hands—so I go at the call of duty. . . ."

*To his Son, John.*

"LONDONDERRY,

"*April* 12, 1884.

"I have been thinking very anxiously over your letter. We must now decide what you are to be. There is, indeed, nothing I could more desire than to see you a good doctor; and a good doctor you will be if you are a good man, working for the right reasons. There is no harder life

than a doctor's ; but so far as it is mere hard work, it is not to be feared. What does not involve labour is not worth doing. But think of this : a doctor has to care for human life—he has suffering and disease to cure. The living look to him to save the dying, the dying look to him for life. You can remember from our experience of last year how much unnecessary pain a doctor's error of judgment may cause; and mother can tell you of many cases where an error of judgment has had more serious results—has caused a loss of life. But we know also how much a doctor may do for a patient—Dr. Keith saved our dear Barbara ; we shall never cease to be grateful to him for the kindness and skill which gave her back to us. And many a life has he so saved.

" Now do you know why I am saying this ? To make you understand the grave responsibility of choosing such a profession. I would not have a son of mine enter it unless it were to do his duty in it ; and his duty is to use all his energies and efforts to lighten the suffering and sorrow of man. What this means you cannot as yet fully know ; but if you feel that you can be the best possible and do the noblest possible by being a doctor, then a doctor, so far as I can help you, you shall be. And I will not stand any longer in the way of your Practical Chemistry. You can enter, only I would like to see Mr. Keeling after I come home. But for this you need not wait.

" When you were a little child I often thought how willingly I would consent to be nothing and do nothing in the world, if I could only make you a good man ! And I feel so still—anxious only to see you one who could serve your God and your kind ! If you do that, I shall be happy to be remembered only as your father ! . . ."

The letters to his mother reveal Fairbairn in a light in which he seldom showed himself outside his family circle. There are many others of them too intimate for publication, and in all of them are personal and domestic details which are only of interest in so far as they reveal the character of the writer. But every page breathes the reverent affection in which he always held his mother.

To her he is still the big boy, who will go his own way, and whose vagaries are past understanding. They show too how much his home life stood for, and how dear it was to him. Be he never so busy, he has still time and interest to spare for his wife's cares and his children's needs. He chronicles the most trivial household events : the coming and going of servants, the children's illnesses, of which there were many, their school life, their dress and everything that was theirs. His tone is always buoyant with a vein of humour in it, and behind it all an unshakable faith in God. To those who knew Fairbairn only from his books, or through business relations, his religion was apt to seem hard, academic, and mechanical. He had all a Scotsman's shyness and reserve, and did not speak easily in private of the deepest things. But once the veil is lifted, we discover the essentially pious nature of his mind. Whatever we may think of the outward expression of his faith, that faith itself is to him the greatest of realities, "the master light of all his seeing." He refers everything to God almost with the simplicity of a child, and he has no other aims in life than to do his duty, to make the best use of his opportunities, and to further the cause and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

Fairbairn's work at Bradford was by no means confined to the College or the Lecture Room. He took a deep interest in the life of the town, and was greatly attracted by the grit, the intellectual vigour, and the sturdy common sense of the Yorkshire people. He shared to the full the aspirations of the working people for better conditions of life and for an ampler opportunity, and he helped in his own way those who had set themselves to bring about a higher intellectual and political life in the town. He took part in the work of reviving the Bradford Philosophical Society and became one of its most useful and influential members. He had every sympathy with the ideals of men like Sir Titus Salt and Alfred Illingworth, and left no stone unturned to inculcate both by

precept and example the duty of good citizenship. He was a constant contributor to the *Bradford Observer*, as he had been to the *Aberdeen Free Press*. In Yorkshire, as in Scotland, he did not confine himself to writing on theological and religious subjects, but often dealt with social and political questions in their higher aspects and relations. He left behind him in Bradford an impression of vast learning and vigorous eloquence, combined with a broad humanity and a ready and gracious comradeship.

# CHAPTER V

## RELATIONS WITH ENGLISH CONGREGATIONALISM

When Fairbairn came to England in 1877 he found the transition from the Evangelical Union to English Congregationalism both easy and pleasant. His own mind had long been moving in that direction. His ecclesiastical difficulties had produced in him a strongly sympathetic feeling for historic independency, and he had been accustomed to teach and practice the main principles for which it stood—the requirement that all the members of a Christian church shall be Christians and shall give evidence of the fact, the spiritual autonomy of the individual church, and the sole headship of Jesus Christ in His Church. Experience in the Evangelical Union had also prepared him for the idea of a close co-operation and fellowship between the churches of the same name; and English Congregationalists soon found that, Scotchman though he was, he had nothing to learn from them either as to their church polity or order. By that time the Congregational Union of England and Wales had been in existence about forty-six years. It was, however, simply a loose federation of churches for consultation, fellowship, and mutual help. It had, then at any rate, no other function, and could not either legislate for, or exercise authority over, the churches which constituted it. In spite of these limitations, or rather perhaps because of them, the Union had begun to wield a marked influence in shaping the policy and moulding the thought of the churches. In more recent times its organisation has become much closer, and it has taken to itself more and

more of a connexional and presbyteral character under the pressure of various needs and circumstances. But at the time of which we are speaking it was still in its earlier stage, and did not command the confidence of more than a majority of the churches. It had just passed through a serious theological crisis, which had been surmounted by the only means open to it, viz. by making a Declaration of Faith, which was not to be regarded as an "exaction or imposition of Faith." This was justified by Dr. Dale in 1878 in the following terms:

"No doubt the moral effect of the new declaration would be to drive off and keep off those who are out of sympathy with the central elements of the Evangelical Faith: and I for my part do not see what end is to be answered by an association of men who are not committed to some common belief."

Fairbairn's own position was generally akin to that of Dr. Dale. In this same year, to a clergyman of the Church of England, who asked him in regard to the views of Congregationalists on the Apostles' Creed and sacramental efficacy, he wrote a letter which throws some light on his mind:

"Airedale College,

"My dear Sir, "*December* 12, 1878.

"I have much pleasure in giving you what information I can on the two points you specify; only it must be remembered that the absence of what you call a 'stereotyped creed' involves this, that no individual can do more than speak for himself and can only represent what he believes to be the mind of the associated churches.

"(1) Congregational churches may be said to regard the so-called 'Apostles' Creed' as an ancient and interesting but entirely unauthoritative symbol. Yet it may be regarded as, on the whole, a happy and correct expression of their faith. As to the clause which was, as you know, added at a comparatively late period, 'descendit ad inferos,' or in its older and more precise

form, 'ad inferna,' it would depend entirely on the interpretation as to whether it could be said that we did or did not believe it. We certainly accept the teaching of texts like Ephesians iv. 9; Acts ii. 27, 31; 1 Peter iii. 18, 19: but as certainly do not believe that they teach any doctrine of an 'intermediate state,' at least in the ordinary theological sense of these words.

"(2) A Congregational minister would not, as a rule, object to speak of Baptism or the Lord's Supper as 'a means of grace,' but he would not mean by this phrase that they possessed anything that could in the ordinary theological sense be named 'Sacramental Efficacy.' He would hold that to the Sacrament *per se*, or to the person who administers it, no special or peculiar virtue belongs: its worth depends entirely on the meaning it conveys, or is made to convey, to the mind of the person who receives it: i.e. not on its quality as a sacrament, but on his state and attitude of mind as a believer. With the hope that these explanations may suffice for your purpose,

"I am,

"Yours sincerely,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

As soon as he had settled down in Bradford Fairbairn became connected with the Yorkshire Congregational Union, and began to render splendid service to the churches of the county. He preached in them frequently, visiting large and small alike, often gratuitously, and always at the cost of no little toil and weariness. He was always ready to help and advise them, and threw himself sympathetically into their struggles and aims. He was elected Chairman of the County Union in 1880, and in the addresses he delivered from the Chair spoke freely of his admiration for Yorkshire Independency and of what it had taught him. "No years of my life," he said on one occasion, "have been so fruitful as these years here. In coming face to face with our churches, and being allowed to speak to them of the Word of Life, I have learned more of them and of the religious, ecclesiastical, political,

and social state of England than during all the previous years of my life." And again: "I wish thus publicly to state that nothing has so impressed me, since coming to live among you, as the transcendent national importance of our Independent churches, the altogether exceptional and extraordinary degree in which they contribute to the commonweal, to the wisdom of the English people, and the good of the English State."

Fairbairn was elected Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales for the year 1883. As we have already seen from his letters, he appreciated the honour very keenly, and he threw himself into the work with ardour. The post is an entirely honorary one, and, for the time being the Chairman exercises a kind of visitatorial and quasi-episcopal function among the churches. He presides at the annual and autumnal meetings of the Union, at each of which he delivers an address which is regarded as a *concio ad clerum* and *ad ecclesiam*. He is much in request at various important church and denominational functions during the year, and these also give him an opportunity of speaking with some authority on different religious and ecclesiastical topics. Fairbairn's chairmanship was regarded with more than usual interest, seeing that he was so recent an importation from Scotland, and yet was one to whom the denomination was beginning to look as a theological leader. His first address delivered in London at the May meetings more than answered the highest expectations that had been formed. The address was entitled, "The Christian Religion in the First Century."[1] It occupied an hour and a half in delivery, and is a closely reasoned and carefully expressed vindication of Free Church principles in their theological and religious aspect. The speaker begins by describing the diversities in the Christian

[1] It was published, along with other addresses from the Chair of the Union, in a volume of *Studies in Religion and Theology*, issued in 1910. The references are to the pages in this volume.

Church as not of themselves evil, only made so by the bitterness they have engendered. They are due to the greatness of Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Church. "It is the wonder of men in the presence of Christ that has created the churches; they are so immense a multitude because He has been so creative a personality."[1] It is by the spirit of Christ that the Free Churches have been brought into being. They do not stand apart from national life or national religion, but live to serve these ends, and seek to make men better citizens by making them members of God's kingdom.

"The ultimate grounds, I will not say of our Nonconformity, but of our existence as Free Churches of Jesus Christ, are theological and religious, not political. Our reasons for dissenting from the Church of England are too fundamental to be merely or mainly ecclesiastical. We dissent because we believe that she fails adequately to interpret and realise for the people of England the religion of Christ. Where the matter is so radical, it is better to turn from the more occasional to the deeper and more permanent issues. I would it were possible for the Christian people of England to forget for one splendid hour their ancient feuds, and to look to their ecclesiastical rivalries and controversies from what may be termed the standpoint of the Redeemer, and man's simple and direct relation to Him."[2]

In the spirit of this appeal the speaker then turns to an estimate of the work of the early Church. It changed the whole conception and outlook of man, his idea of God, his literature, his art, his philosophy, and his politics. It represented the dominance of the spiritual, and it set out, in the hope thus engendered, to conquer the world. In doing so, its impulse and its strength, its inspiration and its orders came from Jesus Christ.

"Christ creates Christianity, His is its being: everything material or essential in it runs back to Him. Men may say, 'The religion owes less to Jesus than to Paul;

[1] P. 3. [2] P. 5.

he made its high and spiritual universalism.' But Paul made no part of the matter, made only the form in which it could best be stated, the terms in which it could most fitly be explained. The theology of Paul was a science of Christ, and without the Christ no science of Him had been possible."[1]

"In a moment, at His touch, as it were, a new system of the universe rose, founded on Him. God was changed, invested with a richer nature, a more manifold unity, a fatherliness that made His sovereignty as gracious as it was supreme. Man was changed, took a vaster meaning, stood in all his centuries and in all his units a mighty organism built round the Christ. The inheritance from the past, the outlook as regards the future, the duties to the present, the possibilities of evil, the capabilities of good—all were changed at once and for ever by this contact of Jesus with the thought and spirit of man."[2]

The religion thus founded is by its very nature missionary and universal. It has one God to preach to the world, one Christ to glorify, and in His name one salvation to proclaim. This leads to a discussion of the character and methods of the first preachers of the Gospel, the scantiness of their equipment, and the splendour of their achievement. What they did was due to the nature of the message they had to deliver, the doctrine of the Cross. What the Cross stands for, as well in its external symbolism as in its internal significance, is then eloquently set forth. It wrought an unspeakable change in religious values and relations, and revealed, not only a new conception of God, but a new view of humanity.

"All that this doctrine implied may not here be told. The ideal of a new world was in it, forces reconstructive of humanity worked in its bosom. No such centre of new moral, religious, revolutionary energies had ever come out of eternity into time. Infinite promise was in it for individual souls, regenerative agencies, ameliorative and progressive forces, boundless hopes and highest

[1] P. 13. [2] P. 15.

possibilities for the race. Silently, without noise of the builder's tools, the new Jerusalem had descended out of heaven from God: softly, unperceived by the coarse senses of statesmen and thinkers, there had fallen the seeds of a new mankind which was to be organised in faith and love unto righteousness." [1]

Then comes an examination of the soil in which this good seed was sown, a vivid and picturesque description of the moral and religious condition of the Roman Empire in the early years of our era. It was a condition of things which only served to enhance the miracle of the success of Christianity; and if that miracle is to be repeated to-day, it will be by the same means applied to the new circumstances in which men now live. On this note of appeal the address closes.

"Then the Gospel was preached, and the men who believed lived as they believed: by speech and life the new religion lived and moved. The supreme doctrine was the doctrine of the Cross: without it there was no word that saved. But it was never preached as a mere detached or isolated fragment, a visible point looking out of palpable darkness. Had it been so preached it would never have prevailed. Let both the Gospels and the Apostolic Epistles show how it was preached: it was set in living relation to the whole realm of thought, to the world of being and action. A centre to be a centre must have a circumference; the man who does not, now and then, make his people feel the immense circumference of the truth, with all the lines radiating from the centre towards it, does not preach the Gospel. But the circumference, to be a circumference, must have a centre; and the man who does not stand in the centre, speak to all men and look at all things from it, is a man who will never feel or make others feel that there is any circumference whatever: will never see himself, or make others see, the beauty of the converging and radiating lines. Here in the vital centre the apostles stood, and their work was the splendid work we have seen: here too let us

[1] P. 31.

stand, coveting their spirit, emulating their zeal, imitating their methods, and we shall bear our part in making the kingdoms of the world the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."[1]

Fairbairn followed up this address at the autumnal meetings of the Union held in Sheffield by delivering another intended to supplement it, on the subject of "The Christian Religion in the Nineteenth Century."[2] It is a vivid and restrained estimate of the place of religion and of the church in modern life. Though it was written just thirty years ago the whole tone of the address is curiously modern, and it fits present circumstances, almost as though it had been intended for them. It speaks about the "widespread estrangement" from Christianity to be found both among the cultivated classes and among the working people. It notes the increasing pessimism and melancholy of the thought of the time: "The men who have broken with faith feel in their best moments sadder, almost inclined to turn back into their yesterdays in search of the faith and hope they have lost." It mourns the "confident materialism" that is making religion a matter of supreme indifference and the work of the churches almost a futility. In order to meet the conditions thus described, Fairbairn urges the necessity of a deeper and truer conception of the meaning of Christianity and a more faithful and practical embodiment of it in the churches. The theme was one on which he was never tired of expatiating, and in urging it upon the Free Churches he did a work the force of which is not yet spent and the need for which has not yet ceased. Fairbairn does not shrink from applying to Christianity the pragmatic test. He appeals to its history, to the work it has done in the world, and to its adaptability to the conditions and circumstances of every age. "To see and know these things, the religion must be studied not in the

[1] P. 45.
[2] Cf. *Studies in Religion and Theology*, p. 47 foll.

abstract but in the concrete ; not in its institutions but in the persons possessed of its living truths."[1] So studied Christianity will be found to be full of still unexhausted energies and to be capable of meeting the most clamant needs of to-day. These needs it has itself largely created, and it can satisfy them through the men and the churches it inspires.

"They stand between religion and the age, and have duties to both and must be loyal to both, not sacrificing either to the other, leaving the age ignorant of religion or religion dumb and impotent before the age. But before a man can interpret religion, bring out all its infinite significance for mind and life, he must allow religion to take possession of his spirit so to penetrate and pervade him by its mighty energies and truths that it shall be to him an inspiration and, he be for it a prophet."[2]

This adaptation of religion to the needs of the age through prophetic personalities is rendered necessary by the philosophic materialism of the cultivated classes on the one hand, and by the practical indifference of the industrial classes on the other. The address deals with each of these in turn. It shows how the former is, in many senses, but a revival of pagan intellectualism, and records the confident belief that in the nature of man we have a sufficient guarantee that the victory will be to the ideal and the divine. The latter problem is really the more serious, and brings home to the churches a very grave responsibility. It is true that their chief function is to save men by the preaching of the Gospel. This they must do first and at all costs.

"But what concerns us is not this primary duty, but the conditions necessary to its fulfilment : how the churches are to become better able, as regards the great body of the people, successfully to carry it out. It is not enough to organise evangelistic missions, however excellent and fit these may be. It is not the

[1] *Studies in Religion and Theology*, p. 63. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 66.

distinction of the industrial classes to be in peculiar need of conversion, it is the need of the so-called upper classes in a still more eminent degree. What is necessary to reach and affect both is a still more fully realised Christianity, the resolute endeavour to bring the religion professed of the churches into completer harmony with the mind of Christ. The toiling masses do not feel what it can do for them or see what it has done. The Gospel is full of a large economical spirit, and it was never so needed to be heard as at this hour." [1]

It is therefore necessary that Christianity should have something to say on the Land question, on the relations between capital and labour, and on all those social and industrial problems in which the democracy is supremely interested, and which modern conditions are forcing to the front. But if this is to be done effectively, the churches must know and be able adequately to represent the religion they profess. They must also be acquainted with the facts and the conditions of life in the modern world. But more important still is their ability to realise the essential ideal of the religion for which they stand. It is necessary, therefore, that they should be free. This leads to a characteristic discussion of the respective merits of Free and Established Churches.

" An Established Church is not free enough to obey its own truth, it too much depends on man's law to make him feel the authority of God's. Established Churches are always strongest in periods of decadent belief, but weakest in times of commanding and progressive enthusiasm. Two things at this moment operate in their favour—the conservative instincts of an old and historical people, proud of their ancient institutions, and the current agnosticism which makes many too uncertain or too indifferent in religion to bear the moral strain or tension of the Free Churches." " A Free Church may act in the field of politics, but its political is not its primary, only its secondary or derivative character. An

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 97.

Established Church, as Established, is a Church politically created and legally guaranteed ; but a Free Church is a voluntary society created by affinities of thought and life." "An Established Church thinks of the maintenance of the constitution rather than the good of the people ; a Free Church thinks of the good of the people rather than the maintenance of the constitution, and regards the constitution as only good so far as it promotes the people's well-being. The one conceives religion as in need of a nurse, the Church as favoured by being made a suckling of kings. The other conceives religion as the nurse and master of sovereign and subjects alike, a kingdom of heaven where every king on earth is a vassal and never can be any more. An Established Church is more of a static, but a Free Church more of a dynamic force in society: the one seeks its authority in the past, the other its ideals and inspirations in the future ; the first is satisfied with what is, but the other strives towards what ought to be the ideally perfect State, where all men may exercise the power to use the rights they have won as citizens, to realise as persons the image of God, and as peoples His kingdom of heaven on earth." [1]

The address concludes with an appeal for a ministry faithful to the highest Christian ideals of the past and free to speak with prophetic voice to the needs of the present.

These two addresses gave to Fairbairn at once a leading place in the counsels of Congregationalism, and indeed among the Free Churches generally. Men felt that a new power had come among them, and began on all sides to look to him for light and leading in their difficulties whether ecclesiastical or theological. He seemed to them to combine, in a quite unusual way, the most profound learning with practical good sense and a clear understanding of the needs of ordinary men. From this time forth he began to be greatly run after as a preacher on all kinds of special occasions, and the churches looked to him for pronouncements in their name. His close friendship

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 102 foll.

with Dr. Hannay, then Secretary of the Congregational Union, brought him into touch with the corporate life of the churches; and both on the Committee of the Union, in the denominational Press, and in various Free Church enterprises he began to make his influence felt. It must be confessed, however, that Fairbairn never could have made what is known as a good committeeman. He was too sure of his own mind, and too outspoken as to his own opinions. He did not suffer fools gladly, and grudged the time wasted on formal details. He had none of the instincts of the wire-puller. At the same time, his influence in his own denomination, and among the Free Churches, was altogether good. He led them out into larger places both of thought and action. What he did among them for the study of theology, and for the encouragement of social service, has yet to be more fully told, but all this, along with his own personal influence, made strongly for a broader outlook and a more practical Christian faith. But he by no means escaped criticism in the process. From the first he was looked upon with some suspicion by the more orthodox, and it must be said that he never took any pains to conciliate them. Nor did he always make himself quite intelligible. His own mind worked best in large spaces and among great masses of material, and other people often became lost and confused just where he himself was most at home. His love too for highly wrought antitheses was always a snare to him. It led him into extreme statements, and gave too sharp an outline to many of his conclusions. Yet he never gave any reason to doubt his desire to be fair, and to state both sides of a case with equal justice to either. The following criticism of his Sheffield address in *The Spectator* of October 13, 1883, rather shrewdly sums up the position:

"Those who are interested in watching the change in the modern religious temper should read carefully the address of Dr. Fairbairn delivered before the Congregational Union on Tuesday. Its object was to describe

the position of modern thought, especially sceptical thought, in relation to Christianity ; and though of course orthodox, it was penetrated throughout by an admirable fairness. Dr. Fairbairn treated the modern movement as an outburst of naturalism, a new effort to get behind Christ and find a basis for religion in Nature. There is not a sentence in his speech to which a just-minded Agnostic could object, though he might not like the icy way in which he is told that the modern movement is a revival rather than a progress, that M. Renan is very like Celsus, and that Mr. Matthew Arnold is ' a modernised Lucian, with better manners, more religion, and a higher mind.' We cannot summarise the address, which ended in a strong appeal to the audience to introduce their religion into the affairs of life, until ' secularism should have no excuse for its being ' ; but its tone was as unlike the narrow bigotry often attributed to dissent as it is possible to conceive. Dissenters must, however, pardon us if we say that thirty years since it could not have been delivered, or would have been pronounced there and then an example of the evil tolerance of scepticism which was impeding the Word. Dr. Fairbairn did not swear enough at heresy for the older members."

In the autumn of 1885 Fairbairn delivered an address before the Congregational Union at Hanley, entitled " The Sacerdotal and the Puritan Idea." This was at the time regarded by his friends as being a kind of manifesto. It put into definite form views which had long been crystallising in his mind, and he stated them so strongly and clearly as to create an unusually deep impression.

The Rev. F. H. Stead, who heard the address, describes it as follows :

" Perhaps one of the most extraordinary exhibitions of Fairbairn's power on the platform was witnessed at Hanley, during a meeting of the Congregational Union, when he was replying to recent sacerdotal utterances and was reinforcing the distinctive principles of Nonconformist theology and Nonconformist life. It should be

premised that Mansfield College was then (in 1885) as yet only a scheme. Beginning labouredly and slow, he gradually wound up the assembly to a pitch of enthusiasm that the most rapturous political meeting has rarely paralleled. The audience responded to every point with the wildest demonstrations of sympathy, until the cheering grew almost frantic and incessant. When Fairbairn at last sat down and the tempest of applause had subsided, Dr. Dale turned to him and said, 'There now, you have built Mansfield College, topstone and all.'"

The address diagnosed the existing religious situation in this country with great skill and insight, and set forth the duty of Free Churchmen in terms which are not yet obsolete. It begins by setting forth the radical opposition between the Catholic and the Puritan conceptions of the Church. The one makes the Church an organised society, with a political constitution, possessed of divine authority, and invested with divine rights. Its offices and orders are necessary to its very being, and represent a continuous succession through which alone Apostolic grace can come. Its sacraments are miracles and mysteries, depending for their efficacy on proper administration. The other conception makes the Church the Kingdom of God or of the truth, created and governed by Christ, and composed of His saints. It has no official sanctities or inalienable orders, but depends on the living work of the Spirit of God. Its sacraments are symbols charged with spiritual significance and power only to those who receive them in humility and faith. The typical historical manifestation of this latter principle Fairbairn finds in English Independency.

"The Congregational system or ideal is not a mere theory of Church politics or government, but fundamentally a doctrine of religion, a way of apprehending and realising the Christian faith. Its ecclesiastical polity is but its doctrine applied to the exercise and cultivation of the religious life. Catholicism is a splendid system,

even without the religious idea that fills it: but Independency, apart from its religious basis and ideal, is at once mean and impotent, impracticable and visionary. Our fathers held that legislation, civil or ecclesiastical, could not create a church: conversion and converted men alone could. All were kings and priests unto God, and could exercise their functions only as they stood in open and immediate relations with Him. In His Church Christ did not reign, while officials governed; He both governed and reigned. Over against the Puritan ideal stood the Anglican system, which, becoming in the hands of Laud at once sacerdotal and imperial, made the King absolute in the State that the priesthood might be supreme in the Church. That policy forced our fathers to feel that freedom, to reign in either the spiritual or civil realm, must reign in both: that there could be no Free Church while the State was enslaved, no enslaved State where the Church was free. Political liberty and spiritual religion were not two, but one: neither was possible without the other: and so for both Hampden died, and Milton pleaded, and Cromwell fought: while their resistance to both had the remarkable effect of making of Laud a martyr and of Charles a saint." [1]

In a brief historical sketch Fairbairn then shows how the Free Churches came to suffer various political and civil disabilities, and found themselves in the long struggle to get rid of them, and to win the liberty for which they stood. They sought for freedom, not that they might lord it over others, but that they might realise their characteristic religious idea. Now, however, at the very moment when victory seems within their grasp, they stand confronted with a resurgent sacerdotalism which throws down to them the old challenge in a new and sharper form. It is a moment of testing and of opportunity, and a new Puritanism will be needed to confront this new Sacerdotalism. But the fundamental attitude of the Free Churches towards Anglicanism is not to be determined by the fact of the Establishment. There is

[1] *Studies in Religion and Theology*, p. 111.

a more radical and vital opposition, and it is represented by the terms Sacerdotalism and Puritanism. These will be left to fight their battle long after the struggle for religious equality in the sight of the law has been brought to an end. For the Free Churchman the trouble about sacerdotalism is not the fact that it unchurches him. Nor does it now, as in the days of Laud, make extravagant claims for the divine right of kings and ally itself with tyranny and oppression. Fairbairn pleads strongly for a generous recognition by Free Churchmen of the religious and social zeal of modern Anglicanism. He regards it as thoroughly evangelical in spirit, but submits that its very nature unfits it to secure the high ends at which it aims. His criticism is concentrated on two points. In the first place sacerdotalism limits the universality of divine grace, and in the second place conditions it on imperfect men. "To hold and command the approaches of the soul to God and of God to the soul" is so high and serious a task that only Christ Himself is equal to it. Thus "the fundamental difference which divides the evangelical from the sacerdotal idea is theological: the Gospel reposes on the sovereign paternity of God, and His immediate relation through Jesus Christ with all men. But in this is contained a second difference which is as decisive and determinative—the conditions of acceptance with Him are all spiritual and ethical. They are in no respect sensuous and formal, depending on rites observed or external relations established: but universal and possible to all men, they spring out of the very natures of God and man, and what may be described as their primary and essential relations." This position Fairbairn proceeds to justify from the early history of the Church, and concludes by urging that the evangelical ideal for which the Free Churches stand is to be realised, not by controversy, but by setting forth the Gospel of the grace of God in positive and creative fashion. The official priesthood must be replaced by a spiritual, and the

doctrine of the sacraments by faith in the personal and reigning Christ. "Our little churches" must be made to feel that they are priestly bodies, and in their continuity of religious life with the saints of all ages they must find a substitute for the continuity of apostolic succession.

"If the sacerdotal idea is to be superseded, it must be by an idea sublimer, truer, and more spiritual; and so our need is men who not only believe this idea, but are able so to present it as to win to faith and obedience our cynical and sceptical age."

"The time is at hand when, our great ecclesiastical conflict over, we shall be face to face, not with the Establishment, but with the Anglican Church. Let us then make it manifest that we claim every man in England for Christ, and that we mean every man to feel what the grace of God signifies for him. If we so interpret our mission, then we shall accomplish a work that will make it impossible for the sceptre that controls English destinies ever to pass into the hands of a disestablished sacerdotal church, and we shall help to keep it for ever in the hands of the risen and reigning Christ."

Like many men at that time, Fairbairn was wrong in anticipating an early victory for Nonconformist political principles. But he was certainly right in warning his friends that they had to reckon, not only with the State Establishment, but with a sacerdotal conception of religion that was even more dangerous to liberty and alien to the mind of Christ. Events have abundantly justified his words, and have made it increasingly clear that the Free Churches can only maintain their testimony and achieve the ends they have in view by being true to their high ideals and vocation, and not by any controversial methods either political or ecclesiastical. Perhaps no man did more than Fairbairn to rescue Nonconformity from the political reproach that had so long attached to it. He turned it back on its spiritual and theological beginnings, and bade it find in the fulfilment of these its

true bent, and the best policy for its present needs. Though he did not himself shrink from controversy where necessary, as we shall see when we come to deal with his discussions on Catholicism, Roman and Anglican, he regarded it always as merely incidental, and was much more concerned with the positive and constructive expression of the Christian life and message, which, he believed, could only be found in its purest form in the Free Churches. He had reached this conclusion himself as the result of much thought and painful experience, and he laboured unceasingly to bring it home to the churches. It may be said, without fear of contradiction, that their whole history during the last thirty years has been an ample justification of his teaching in this respect.

How entirely he identified himself with the English "Dissenting Interest" may be seen from the following words written in 1902:

"I came to England in early manhood fresh from the study of Matthew Arnold, and full of the idea that the Dissenter was the modern Philistine, who did not understand culture, hated the Church, loved a narrow creed, and so delighted in controversy as to promote anarchy even where he meant to secure order. I became the head of a Dissenting College, mixed with Dissenters of every kind and class, was disillusioned, illumined, and, as I saw them from within, learned to know the density of the darkness in which Matthew Arnold had dwelt and written. Two things surprised me in the Dissenter—his love of education and his devotion to his civil and political duties. The former was wonderful to me—a man of northern birth and mind, with the love of learning working as a passion in my very blood: the latter was marvellous to me as a student of English history who knew what the Dissenter had suffered and what an unkind stepmother the English State had been to him. But I felt the division and antipathies of sects still more astonishing, until I was able to construe the attitude of the Church to Nonconformity and of Nonconformity to the Church not simply through religion, but through

history and politics. I who had been a Dissenter in Scotland almost without knowing it, became in England acutely conscious of my dissent : and though I have in the English Church to-day co-workers and friends I love almost above any others, yet a thousand things not personal, but statutory, not religious, but legislative, make me even more conscious of my dissent than I was at first."

In the year 1882 the Congregational Union celebrated its jubilee. The event was signalised by raising a Jubilee Fund of a quarter of a million, and by arranging for a series of lectures, mainly on the history and principles of Independency, to be delivered in different parts of the country. Their aim was " to promote a knowledge of the principles for which Congregationalists contend, and to show by illustrations drawn from English history the place those principles have held in the religious and political life of the English people." With the choice of subjects and lecturers Fairbairn, as his correspondence with Dr. Hannay shows, had much to do, and when the lectures were published he contributed a long introductory chapter on " Ecclesiastical Polity and the Religion of Christ." This he afterwards reissued in a somewhat expanded form, and with the addition of an immense apparatus of notes, in the volume of *Studies in Religion and Theology*. The article contains a vigorous exposition and defence of Congregational Church polity, as compared with the Episcopalian on the one hand and the Presbyterian on the other. In it Fairbairn makes use of the then recent work of Lightfoot and Hatch, the result of which he states as follows :

" We may say, then, the divine right of Episcopacy is dead : it died of the light created by historical criticism. It is open to no manner of doubt that the modern bishop has no place in the New Testament. The same office, according to the aspect in which it was viewed, was variously designated, bishops and presbyters were

identical; and one church might have many bishops or presbyters, just as it might have many deacons. Each church was a brotherhood, supremacy over it was conceded to no man. Government, indeed, existed, order was enforced, but the men who ruled were the men who served, and the Church was in all matters of judgment and discipline the ultimate authority. . . . The liberty they enjoy in Christ is inalienable, and to be Christ's is to be introduced into a brotherhood too real and too spontaneous to accept the bondage of any officialism, however consecrated or endowed." [1]

Side by side with this picture we may put Fairbairn's description of the ideals of the early Congregationalists.

"Their aim was to realise the ideal of the Apostolic age, to follow Christ's way in order that they might reach His religion. It is a great mistake to imagine that their notion was exhausted in the thesis—the apostolic polity is the authoritative and normative polity for all time. Their contention really was: We cannot get at the apostolic religion without going back to the apostolic polity: it must be restored if the religion which Christ instituted and His Apostles preached is to be attained. In their idea of the Church there were four determinative elements. A church is ($\alpha$) a society of the godly, or of men who truly believe and piously live. ($\beta$) It is a society instituted expressly to realise, in the personal and collective life, the religious ideals of Christ. ($\gamma$) It is capable of extension only by means that produce faith, and of development only by agencies that create godliness. ($\delta$) It is autonomous and authoritative, possessed of the freedom necessary to the fulfilment of its mission, the realisation of its ideals: and it is endowed with all the legislative and administrative powers needed for the maintenance of order and the attainment of progress." [2]

The article also discusses, with copious references to the Fathers and to various Anglican and Puritan writers, the influence of different church polities on religious life and thought, and sets in strong relief the great theological

[1] *Studies in Religion and Theology*, p. 168. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 214.

and ethical superiority of the Free Church systems. No doubt the whole is a species of special pleading, but it is sufficiently acute for its purpose, and can give chapter and verse from history for all its conclusions. While the second issue of the article shows some very considerable modifications in detail of the first, the main argument remains unchanged, or rather, appears in a strengthened and more perfect form.

In 1888 the Congregational Union arranged a further series of historical lectures in connection with the bicentenary of the Revolution of 1688. To this series Fairbairn contributed two lectures on "The Reformation and the Revolution of 1688," the first covering the period from the Reformation to the Restoration, and the second the period from the Restoration to the Revolution. These are more popular in form and do not break any new ground, but they are excellent examples of Fairbairn's method of handling large historical subjects, and of tracing the growth and action of religious ideas through long periods of time.

In the summer of 1891 the first International Congregational Council was held in London. It was an attempt to bring together representative Congregationalists of all English-speaking countries for mutual counsel and discussion, a first effort after a federated Congregationalism, which should show the world-wide character of its principles and work. The Presidency of the Council was by one consent conferred on Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, and Dr. Mackennal was its English secretary. In the preliminary arrangements Fairbairn took a considerable part. He was present at most of the sessions ; [1] spoke several times in the course of the debates ; and contributed a paper on "Congregationalism and the Church Catholic." He also wrote a preparatory article in the *Independent* newspaper in

[1] Cf. *Proceedings of the London International Congregational Council*, pp. 96, 213, 227, 302, 409.

May, 1891, entitled, "What Meaneth the Council?" in which he spoke of it as follows:

"This International Council is no mimic Trent or late Nicæa. The men do not gather in their hundreds in the interest of division, but of union and brotherhood, to find out wherein they agree, and how they may still more agree: wherein lies their duty and how the duty may best be performed. The Council speaks of an Independency that is ceasing to be an isolation and learning to become a brotherhood. There is nothing that has so little solidarity as an autocracy. It may secure cohesion, but cannot realise unity: its weapons are the mechanical forces and clamps that may aggregate and hold together atoms: they do not represent those vital principles and laws which can build up a living and productive and complete organism. Uniformity is possible to methods mechanical: unity is the note of the ever free and organic system. Independency is free because it is brotherly: it is organic because it has a common life springing from a single source: and it has only to obey the law of its being to become a brotherhood of love, whose members have no higher passion than to consult how best to do the Father's will."

"The Council meets then at a great moment. It has duties to the churches in England, in America, in the Colonies, in all the countries of the heathen and Christian world. The ministry in all these places looks to it for a new baptism, for counsel and inspiration. The dumb multitudes in all lands cry in their inarticulate way for help: the churches enslaved by conventionalism, limited by the necessities of the place and the hour, ask for the larger outlook, the nobler enthusiasm, the purer spirit. The men that meet, meet with a graver burden than if they had but a dogma to define, a new formula to invent, or a confession to make. They meet that they may teach us how we may be saved from ourselves, and be filled with the spirit and purposes and love of God. The Council that creates higher ideals for the churches will make itself a noble and an everlasting name."

At the close of the Council a number of the delegates went over to Leyden, in Holland, to be present at the unveiling of a memorial tablet to John Robinson, which had been set up by the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States. Fairbairn was the spokesman of the English representatives at the ceremony. After describing the close relations which existed between those who fought for freedom, in Holland, in this country, and in Scotland, and the great debt owed by British Nonconformists to their Dutch brethren, he concluded:

"In the last century, when our fathers were proscribed and denied admittance to the Universities, many like Neal and Lardner came here, and at Leyden and Utrecht obtained the learning that enabled them to teach the English people. The ties between us have been so intimate that the victory of Holland has been success to England. All that is best in us and all that is best in you we owe to the inspiration of our common faith, and we hope that together we may continue to be worthy to possess that civil and religious freedom whose eloquent advocates have lived and still live in Leyden. Our interests are common, our labours differ, yet agree and tend towards the same end, making for both our peoples broader lines and deeper foundations for the civil and religious freedom which we have together received as an inalienable yet arduous inheritance from our fathers."

Fairbairn was also a delegate to the second International Congregational Council, which was held in Boston, U.S.A., in September, 1899. At the Council he preached what was known as the "official" sermon,[1] from the text, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church." It was a really great deliverance in defence of the free and spiritual conception of the church for which the Council stood. Fairbairn was by this time well known in America and had a great reception. In addition to preaching the sermon he gave an address on

[1] Cf. *Proceedings of the Second International Congregational Council*, p. 64.

"The Influence of the Study of Other Religions on Christian Theology," and also spoke on the subject of the work of theological colleges.

In the early days of his connection with Airedale College Fairbairn took some part in an effort which was made to raise the standard of work and teaching in all the colleges belonging to the Congregational denomination. In those days there were very few theological degrees open to Nonconformist students, and of such opportunities as there were, not many availed themselves. A project was therefore set on foot for establishing a theological examination of a standard equal to that of a University degree, which should be open to students of all theological colleges associated with it. The examination was to be managed by a Board called the Senatus Academicus, and of this Board Fairbairn was one of the first members. He also acted, for a time, as examiner in philosophy and the philosophy of religion. The Senatus did good work for many years, and undoubtedly helped to keep up the standard of theological instruction in the colleges concerned. Fairbairn was never altogether satisfied with it, and both he and his Bradford colleagues retired from the Board at a comparatively early stage in its history. It did not maintain a sufficiently high standard to please him, and he believed that he could better further the cause of theological education by working for the establishment of degrees open to Nonconformists at the Universities. In sending in his resignation he wrote to the secretary of the Senatus as follows :

"I do not know that it would serve any good end to detail my reasons here and now, but they spring mainly from the conviction that the Senatus, as now organised and worked, will tend neither to promote the efficiency of theological instruction in our colleges, nor to raise to a proper degree the ideal of theological education, while it threatens with very serious dangers the freedom of their teaching, alike as regards subjects and methods."

His action in this respect was naturally resented by those responsible for the work of the Senatus, who had counted on his co-operation. It tended to separate Fairbairn and Airedale college from the other Congregational colleges, and certainly retarded that general co-operation among them which is at least one condition of attaining a higher and more uniform standard of work. The Senatus did good work for several years, and only ceased to exist when the increase of theological study and examinations in the newer Universities rendered it unnecessary.

In the year 1901 he took a leading part in establishing a new Congregational paper, *The Examiner*. He had long felt the need of better representation for the denomination in the Press, and his experiences in the Evangelical Union had shown him how much may be accomplished in this direction. The old *Nonconformist and Independent* under Edward Miall had been a real power in the land and a most valuable asset to the churches. But after being reduced to a penny and renamed *The Independent* it had fallen from its high estate. It was understood to be in the market, and Fairbairn along with Dr. Guinness Rogers was responsible for forming a small company to purchase it and start afresh on a new and wider basis. For several years he was a member of the managing committee and a regular contributor to the new paper. He brought to it a very high ideal of what a denominational paper should be, but he had no knowledge of the technical side of the work, and was apt to make demands far heavier than the resources at his disposal could meet. But he used his influence freely in supporting the venture, and the staff of the paper at first consisted almost entirely of men who were brought into it by his persuasion. Things did not go very smoothly, and the difficulties that arose caused him a good deal of not very pleasant correspondence. He might easily have washed his hands of the whole business, but he stuck to it with his usual loyalty,

backing up the men whom he had chosen, and doing his best for what he believed to be the highest interests of Congregationalism. This was but one instance, among many, of the service he rendered his denomination, as it were, behind the scenes.

In the same year (1901) Dr. Parker, who was then Chairman of the Congregational Union, brought forward a scheme for the closer federation of the churches under the name the United Congregational Church. Fairbairn, while sympathising with the objects in view, objected altogether to this name as a misuse of the word Church and as pointing to a denial of the fundamental principle of Congregationalism. He wrote of it :

" I respect the scheme and its authors too much to be willing to accept, because of their good intentions, what would be to me an historical absurdity, and the surrender of all that was most Catholic, most characteristic and most true in our conception of the church. But happily the use of this name has nothing to do with the ideal it has been used to denote and with its intrinsic quality. It is a scheme of brotherhood, of mutual help, of federation for high ends, but it is not a scheme for the incorporation of single independent societies into a sole organisation which could not be and yet spare their independency. Why then use a term which expresses this, and which, as so used, has been protested against, for good and sufficient reasons, by all the men who have understood and believed in the Congregational ideal ever since that ideal became a reality."

The discussion of Dr. Parker's proposals went on for some time, and resulted ultimately in a reconstitution of the Union very much on the lines that Fairbairn desired, but without the adoption of the objectionable name. If from this time forward Fairbairn took a somewhat less active part in the public work of the Union, it was not because of any lack of sympathy with the new movement, but rather because of the increasing pressure of claims in other directions. He was as busy as ever behind the scenes

in guiding the opinion of the churches and in helping them and the institutions of Congregationalism in various ways. Nor is it true, as has sometimes been suggested, that he became estranged from Dr. Parker in consequence of the criticisms he passed on his scheme. The following letter, written by Dr. Parker at the time when his proposals were under discussion, is good evidence to the contrary :

"HAMPSTEAD,

"*November* 3, 1901.

"DEAR DR. FAIRBAIRN,

"More than once you have asked me to take some part or other in connection with your work at Mansfield—a place I have not yet seen—but circumstances were from time to time against me. It was great of you to ask me more than once, and this I have said, in justice to you, to many a man. Mr. Spicer came to see me in May last and incidentally (not at all formally or officially) expressed a wish that I would find my way to Mansfield in 1901. My answer was a warm 'Certainly.' But you know what the Chair-year is. Oh, the letters, the sermons, the consultations, and the addresses! Yet if you have any annual meeting or any function of any kind whatsoever which will permit of my going and coming on the same day, you may rely on my most willing and even strong desire to do anything possible to my strength at the time. I am chained to my City work on Sundays and Thursdays. I do not forget your 'message from the sea.' Nor am I likely to forget it. Some things, mainly jewels, are hidden away 'where thieves do not break through nor steal.'

"Believe me, I wish ever to be,

"Most heartily yours,

"JOSEPH PARKER."

What has been said in this chapter, so far, gives but a very inadequate idea of the work Fairbairn did for Congregationalism. In addition to the more or less public matters that have been mentioned, his correspondence shows that, during the more active years of his life in this country, he was consulted on every matter of importance

that came up in connection with the Union, the colleges, and the churches. He wrote and received numberless letters dealing with such matters as the appointment of ministers to important churches, the filling of college Chairs, the doctrinal position of Congregationalists, the secretariat and chairmanship of the Union, and the action and policy of the Union in regard to various questions of public interest and importance. He was interested in the secondary schools of the denomination as well as in the colleges. He visited them frequently, spoke again and again in their interests, and did not a little to raise their status and to secure for them a more generous recognition and support. Indeed he was inclined to lay almost too much stress on the importance of such schools for the future of the Free Churches. He had the example of Scotland always before his eyes, and he realised how much the English Nonconformists missed in not having the same kind of educational opportunities as those enjoyed across the border. We shall hear more of this in another connection, but meanwhile it should be noted that he regarded the secondary denominational schools as one means of supplying the deficiency, and therefore spared no pains to strengthen and improve them.

Generally speaking, it may be said that Fairbairn did more than any other one man to realise those ideals of Congregationalism for which Dr. Hannay and Dr. Dale had contended. As he said himself of another, he helped to make the denomination respected and respect-worthy. He gave to the churches a new consciousness of their power and mission, and set their cherished principles in a wider perspective. It might be said of him as he said of Dr. Hannay:

"He loved our faith, the evangelical faith by which sinful men are saved; he loved our churches, where, the polity being noble, mean men may so degrade it—a polity that needs noble men to be its adequate administrators: he loved our history, what the fathers had been

and done and thought and attempted for our English people. . . . He did not love a mechanical unity, sacrifice the living unity to a corporate uniformity, but he loved union—the unity of helpful brotherhood. There is no man in obscurest pastorate that had not in him a thoughtful and a loving brother. There is no man in distinguished position that had not in him a ready and a competent counsellor. He saw with statesman instinct that rich and potent churches could not live in isolation, that churches poor and scattered and isolated could not live in strength when sapped by poverty and need. His aim and his love and his great desire was to turn the strength of the strong into the support of the weak, and turn the love of the weak into the encouragement of the mighty." [1]

[1] Quoted in *Constructive Congregational Ideals*, by D. Macfadyen, p. 208.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE FOUNDING OF MANSFIELD COLLEGE
### 1885–1889

AMID all his manifold activities Fairbairn never lost sight of that which he had come to regard as the main work of his life—the teaching of theology and the training of men for the Christian ministry. To this he gave himself with single-minded devotion during his best years, and all other pursuits he made to minister to it. At Bradford he not only set before the churches a new and higher ideal of what a theological college should be, but gave practical expression to it. He succeeded in separating the theological and arts courses, and made the former altogether post-graduate. In time he completed an arrangement whereby the students should take their degree at Edinburgh University, and then come on to Airedale for theology alone. He hoped that this example would be followed in other parts of the country, and was particularly anxious that the facilities afforded by the newer universities should be taken full advantage of by the theological colleges in their vicinity. When, therefore, a proposal was mooted for transferring a Congregational college to one of the older universities he welcomed it at once, and did not a little to put it into shape and to secure for it the support of the churches. There has been some dispute as to just how and when the scheme, which eventually culminated in the transfer of Spring Hill College to Oxford, was first propounded. But there is no doubt that the credit for initiating discussion on the subject belongs to Dr. D. W. Simon. As early as 1875, when he was Principal of Spring Hill College, he brought before his committee

the question as to the advisability of securing for their students "the advantages now open to Nonconformists at the older universities." [1] Nothing was done at the moment, but abortive proposals were made from time to time for sending men from Birmingham to take their literary training at Oxford, and one or two men did go for this purpose to Cambridge. The difficulties were found to be insuperable, though, as we have seen, Fairbairn succeeded in carrying out a similar project at Bradford. Simon, however, returned to the charge, and in 1883 put his ideas into definite shape before a private meeting of some leading Congregational laymen of Liverpool.[2] He then urged the setting up of a non-residential theological hall at Oxford, whose students should first graduate at the university and then receive their theological training in the hall. He thought that the existence of such a hall would attract men who would not otherwise be drawn into the Congregational ministry, and that it might form a rallying point for Nonconformists already in the university. These suggestions were received with a good deal of sympathy, and undoubtedly did something to prepare the minds of Congregationalists for action in the direction indicated whenever the time should be ripe. That time came with the conversion of Dr. R. W. Dale to the idea. Dr. Dale was then far the most powerful influence in English Congregationalism, and the fact that he had said, when the matter was first brought up that, "in the very nature of the case the national universities could never be used for the education of Nonconformist ministers," was quite sufficient to settle the question in the eyes of many. His change of view was largely brought about by the fact that the repeal of the Test Act was followed by the appearance of Nonconformist students both at Oxford and Cambridge in somewhat larger numbers

[1] The Test Act had been repealed, and the universities opened to men of all churches in the year 1871.

[2] Cf. *The Life of David Worthington Simon*, by Dr. F. J. Powicke, pp. 109 foll.

than had been anticipated. This created no difficulty in Cambridge, where Nonconformity was already strong, and where there were churches able and willing to meet the religious needs of Free Church members of the university. But at Oxford the circumstances were very different. Young Nonconformists there often found themselves in an atmosphere that was unsympathetic, and sometimes hostile to their faith, and many of them either conformed or drifted away from religion altogether. Attention was first called to the matter by a letter to Dr. Dale, which has become historic. It was written by Thomas Hill Green, then fellow of Balliol, and afterwards Whyte's Professor of Moral Philosophy. He was one of the most outstanding and influential men in the university, and his estimate of the situation was as follows :

" The opening of the national universities to Nonconformists has been, in my judgment, an injury rather than a help to Nonconformity. You are sending up here, year after year, the sons of some of your best and wealthiest families : they are often altogether uninfluenced by the services of the church which they find here, and they not only drift away from Nonconformity—they drift away and lose all faith ; and you are bound, as soon as you have secured the opening of the universities for your sons, to follow them when you send them here in order to defend and maintain their religious life and faith."

This appeal, especially after it had been backed up in conversation by Prof. Jowett, Master of Balliol, led Dale to think more seriously of the whole question. He visited Cambridge, where there were at that time far more Nonconformists than at Oxford, in order to discover whether there was any feeling there in favour of the establishment of a Nonconformist theological college. He received no encouragement. This is not to be wondered at, for it cannot be too often repeated that the need in Cambridge was never what it was in Oxford. In this matter, as in so many others, the two universities are by no means similar.

and it is always dangerous to argue that what is fitted for the one will be fitted also for the other. This caution should always be borne in mind by those who criticise the attitude which some Cambridge men took up at first to the Mansfield College scheme.

For the time Dale let the matter drop, but only until a suitable occasion for action should arrive. Meanwhile the idea was being discussed in other quarters. In May, 1883, Fairbairn paid a visit to Oxford in order to address the University Nonconformist Union on the Study of Theology and the Training for the Ministry. In the debate which followed his address, the suggestion was made that a Free Church theological hall might some day be established in Oxford. From that time forward the idea was before the minds of certain leading Nonconformists in the university, and was publicly discussed on more than one occasion. In the spring of the following year two articles appeared in the *British Quarterly Review* under the heading, "Nonconformity and the Universities: the Free Churches and a Theological Faculty." One of them was by Prof. Bryce (now the Right Hon. Viscount Bryce), and advocated the setting up of a Nonconformist Theological Faculty in Oxford by a joint committee of all the Free Churches, with the special purpose of training men who had taken their degree, for the ministry of those churches. This, he believed, would be a far more advantageous plan both for Oxford, and for the men concerned, than any attempt to set up a Free Church denominational college on the model of Keble. At the same time the writer mentioned with sympathy the suggestion that one of the existing Congregational colleges should be removed to Oxford as a Free Church theological hall. This would be better than doing nothing, though not so useful as the larger scheme.

The other article was by Fairbairn, and made more detailed proposals much to the same effect. Fairbairn laid stress on the duty of Nonconformists to take their part in the work of what was a national university,

especially as by doing so they could further another most desirable object, viz. the higher education of their own ministry. He recommended the foundation of a theological hall exclusively for graduates, in which the teaching and studies should "in breadth, in fulness, and in scientific character be equal to the classical and philosophical studies in the university." He also advocated the establishment of a Nonconformist university pulpit. "This is a duty we owe to ourselves and to our cause, to the men we send up to study and to the religion we profess."

A similar plan to this had already been advocated by the late Dr. Paton, of Nottingham, in a paper read before a meeting of the Congregational Union at Sheffield in the autumn of 1883. Dr. Paton laid great stress on the new situation created by the opening of the older universities to Nonconformists, and on the duties and responsibilities which followed from it. His proposals met with a mixed reception, but in the discussion which followed there was every disposition to recognise that some step such as he indicated might, in the not very distant future, become both desirable and necessary. It will thus be seen that the idea, which afterwards took shape in the founding of Mansfield, was being ventilated in several quarters at the same time, and the way being prepared for its realisation. The following letter, written some years later to Dr. Mackennal, gives Fairbairn's own account of the steps which led up to the establishment of Mansfield :

"*April* 12, 1894.

"My dear Mackennal,

"With you I think no good can come from discussing such a question as 'who was the originator of Mansfield College.' The true answer is of course that it was no single person, but a tendency incorporated in many persons. The history is, in short, this : So far as priority of suggestion is concerned it belongs to Mr. Gladstone. In the discussions on education with Nonconformists which grew out of the legislation of 1868–72, he

suggested to a deputation in the last or preceding year that they—the Nonconformists—ought to found a college in Oxford. He himself informed me of the matter, and he recalled it to the late Dr. Allon at the time Mansfield was opened. And Allon confirmed his version.

"Turning now to the connexion with Spring Hill, the proposal to use Oxford was made by S. B. Johnson first March 27, 1876, and on April 7, 1876 he moved and Dr. Simon seconded a resolution 'that steps should be taken to secure the advantages offered by Oxford University for the students of Spring Hill College.' A month later the sub-committee recommended a scheme which had nothing to do with a college at Oxford, but only involved the sending of students who could pass *matriculation* there, said students to return to S. H. every term and spend the time by which the S. H. exceeded the Oxford term. They were to be superintended from S. H. 'through correspondence and personal visits,' and were to be allowed exhibitions of £25 or £30. The whole scheme was unworkmanlike and unworkable.

"No direct vote was taken on the scheme, but it was shelved by the committee deciding that its year of office was almost over.

"In the same year a proposal was considered to remove S. H. College nearer Birmingham, it being possible to sell the estate to great advantage, but no word of any removal to Oxford.

"This is all the information on the point which can be found in the minutes. The next reference to Oxford occurs in January, 1884, when Dr. Dale proposes a sub-committee to consider 'the expediency of making Spring Hill a theological college and removing it to Oxford.' Before this no proposal to remove had been made, only to send a few select students. Dr. Dale's is indeed the first Mansfield scheme contained in the minutes.

"The institution of special university preachers which occurred in, I think, 1879, led us to see that something much more specific must be done. In 1881 the matter was discussed with Dr. Dale; Green had written before this to Dale—probably about 1880, but the date cannot be fixed precisely. In the summer of 1883 the scheme afterwards realised was submitted to discussion in Oxford;

it had before been sent in outline to Dr. Hannay. At the Autumnal Meetings in the same year Dr. Paton submitted another scheme, and in a speech afterwards I commended the one which had been for the past three years more or less in discussion. As the occasion required, it was in the spring of 1884 published with Dr. Bryce's in the *British Quarterly*. But more than a year before Bryce's had been submitted to a meeting convened by Mr. Caine, who is also one of the many claimants to the paternity of Mansfield. And so far as the founding of a college at Oxford is concerned his claim is fairly valid.

"In the Mansfield College volume you will find references on pp. 24 and 29 ff.

"Excuse haste,

"Ever yours,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

In June, 1884, Dr. Simon resigned the Principalship of Spring Hill College, Birmingham. This necessitated a complete reconstruction of the work and staff of that institution, and its committee took the occasion again to bring up the question of its transfer to Oxford. After long and anxious discussion, a proposal to that effect was carried, and application was made to the Charity Commissioners for the necessary powers. These were granted, and a new scheme of management for the college was sanctioned and sealed by their order in September, 1885. From the first it had been understood that an essential part of the undertaking was that Fairbairn should be Principal of the new college. He had been already consulted as to the details of the scheme, and his suggestions and attitude are made clear in the following letters to Dr. Dale:

"AIREDALE COLLEGE,

"*December* 18, 1883.

"MY DEAR DALE,

"I am glad to have your letter and to hear what great matters have been before our Spring Hill friends.

"The Scheme is a twofold one: a Theological School and—pray don't smile at the too large terms—a University Pulpit or Chapel.

"A. The School. This should not be a Hall or Residential College, but strictly a School, a place devoted to instruction in special subjects. It would not seek to withdraw undergraduates from the older colleges, or keep them from sharing and feeling to the utmost the common life of the university, or undertake any responsibility in connection with literary or degree work: but would be simply a Theological School or College. The men received need not be required to be only Oxford or Cambridge men: they might come from other universities, or our own colleges, the one thing needful being that they be qualified to begin the study of Theology as preparatory to the work of the Ministry. This relates, of course, simply to men on the foundation, as it were, but the scheme ought to be elastic enough not only to permit, but to invite the presence of men who either wish to know special departments in Theology, or to make it (the College) their field of academic and moral discipline without being committed to our Ministry.

"The number of Professors or Tutors should be not less than four, with the New Testament, the Old Testament, Systematic Divinity, and Church History as their subjects. If it be found possible to have a larger staff, so much the better: room in any case ought to be reserved for occasional Lecturers or Readers. Considering the traditions and customs of Oxford, it would be well to have a fellowship or two carrying tutorial duties, and thus securing the services for a year or two of the more distinguished students who might be put in training for similar posts elsewhere.

"B. The Pulpit or Chapel. If a Hall is built the Chapel ought to be made a special feature of it. In any case a Pulpit ought to be instituted, and services maintained, with the view of reaching and influencing members of the university. This Pulpit ought to be so worked as to introduce our foremost men to the mind and spirit of the place. The immediate charge of the Pulpit may be vested in the Senate or Head of the School, the Professors being also Preachers: but opportunity should be

afforded for the appearance of selected Preachers, men who should be able by their fresher thought and directer speech to quicken the undergraduate mind. The Pulpit seems to me a matter of prime importance: without it the School would not make its presence sufficiently felt in the university, or serve one of its greatest ends, reach and affect those young men who need to be saved to the Free Churches, while not intended for the Ministry.

"But all this implies a School equipped in the most efficient way. And what you say as to endowments seems to me to show how it is possible. Your resources should be made the endowment fund, and the Union challenged to put down a suitable building free of debt. Were the matter well stated, I believe it could be accomplished, and were it, I am sure it would be the greatest work done for and by Independency since 1662."

*To the same.*

"AIREDALE COLLEGE,

"*April* 15, 1885.

"I have a note from Mr. Stephens[1] saying that the Spring Hill Committee meets to-morrow and asking me if I have anything to say.

"If the matter depended on myself alone, I would speak out at once; for, frankly, the duty is so clear and absolute that I do not feel as if I had any choice. But I also feel that I owe it to the Governors and interests of Airedale not to speak out till the constituents or subscribers of Spring Hill have formally ratified the decisions of the Trustees and Council. It must be perfectly obvious that the invitation is to Oxford, and the preparatory work for it, before a justifiable decision can be reached: but it cannot be thus obvious while the removal remains a question for discussion by the subscribers.

"I say this to you that you may state the reasons for delay, but of course my confession of what is held to be duty is for yourself alone.

"I had a long talk with Edward Caird. He emphatically approves the scheme—as indeed do all the Scotch university men I spoke to."

[1] Secretary to the Spring Hill College Board.

*To the same.*

"AIREDALE COLLEGE,

"*October* 2, 1885.

"The Mansfield College scheme I have received as approved and sealed by the Charity Commissioners, and so the time has come when a decision must be given. I now intimate my acceptance of the invitation conveyed to me through you and Alderman Manton. I feel deeply the gravity of this decision. It breaks ties that bind me to men I have truly loved and to an institution I have ever held it an honour to be allowed to serve: and it involves responsibility as great as any a man could well undertake. But our sufficiency must be of God.

"This acceptance assumes the conditions specified in the formal invitation, and also those orally arranged, specifically as regards the house, and the conditions of agreement and obligation.

"I cannot at this moment say when my connexion with Airedale will cease, but the Governors meet on the 13th of this month, and on that date I hope to be able to intimate definitely when my work for you may begin. I should like to meet your Committee on some suitable early day. This perhaps we may arrange when we meet next week."

The scheme here referred to had been beaten out after long and anxious discussions between the Committee of Spring Hill and the Charity Commissioners. The founding of Mansfield[1] meant very much more than the transference of a college from Birmingham to Oxford. The change of place made necessary certain radical changes in the institution. Fairbairn had already been consulted in regard to these, and the scheme, on its purely academic

[1] The name was taken from the family through whose generosity Spring Hill College was first founded. George Storer Mansfield was a member of the Ebenezer Chapel, Birmingham, who, about the year 1826, and under the advice of his minister, Rev. Timothy East, dedicated his property for the founding of a college in which men might be trained for the Christian ministry. His intentions were carried out after his death by his sisters, Mrs. Glover and Miss Mansfield, and the college was opened in 1838.

side, was largely based on his recommendations. But the negotiations with the Commissioners were mainly in the hands of Dr. Dale, and no better man for the purpose could have been found. He had the threefold task of conciliating the minority in Birmingham who were opposed to the removal of the college, of persuading the majority to broaden out the scheme on its doctrinal as well as on its educational side, and of winning over the consent of the Commissioners. These latter met him with somewhat unusual readiness. As he himself has testified :[1]

"I found from the first time that I had an interview with them on this subject, to the very end, a novel, intelligent, and eager interest in this scheme : and they did all in their power to promote its efficiency."

They consented without much difficulty to the transfer of the college to Oxford, to the changes required in order to turn it into a non-residential, post-graduate, and purely theological school, and to such modifications in its mode of government as would, while maintaining the Birmingham connection, bring it into closer relations with the Congregational Union and enable it to make the best possible use of the opportunities which Oxford could give. But the Commissioners were not prepared to go as far as Dr. Dale wished in modification of the doctrinal clauses of the old Trust Deed. They consented, however, to considerable changes in the doctrinal declaration[2]

[1] *Life of R. W. Dale, of Birmingham*, by his son, p. 498.

[2] The clause in the deed is as follows : "Each Trustee and Professor shall declare in writing under his hand that he believes in the Unity of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, in the Divinity of Christ, in the atonement for sin made by His death, and in man's need of the Holy Spirit to enlighten his mind and renew his heart ; that he believes the Holy Scriptures to contain a revelation of God's grace to man, and the rule of man's faith and duty to God, and that he accepts and approves the practice of infant baptism. He shall also declare that he is a Dissenter from the Established Church. Provided, nevertheless, that every declaration required by this clause may be made in such form of words as the declarant shall think proper, and as shall be approved of by the Council."

required from trustees and professors, and they allowed these to make such declaration in their own terms, while at the same time exempting students, tutors and members of the Committee from the necessity of signing it.

It should be said that the work of Dr. Dale and of Fairbairn in advocating this scheme could never have been carried through, as it was, without the hearty and ungrudging support of the majority of the Committee of Spring Hill, led by Mr. Alderman Manton. These men did a real and disinterested service to the cause of Nonconformity and of sacred learning, which ought to be fully recognised. They had to meet with considerable opposition in Birmingham itself. Spring Hill was a local institution in which the Birmingham Congregational Churches took a deep interest, and of which they were proud. Removed to Oxford, they felt that it would cease to be theirs in any real sense. They had also serious doubts, shared by many others at the time, as to whether Nonconformists would not lose more than they could gain by setting up a college in Oxford. The doubts thus expressed only, however, served to throw into stronger relief the courage, foresight, and faith of the men who advocated the scheme and carried it through to success.

In this work Fairbairn had naturally a great part to play. The financial position was difficult from the first. There was the endowment of Spring Hill College, amounting to about £2,500 a year, and something was expected from the sale of the building. But none of this was available for the new building that was needed at Oxford. If this was to be worthy of the place—and that was always regarded as a *sine qua non*—then a sum of at least £50,000 would be required. This would need to be raised from Congregationalists all up and down the country, and in order to do this it would be necessary to have the new departure carefully explained and skilfully advocated. This was the task to which Fairbairn had to set himself

as soon as he decided to leave Airedale for Oxford. He was ably seconded in it by Dr. Dale, Mr. Albert Spicer (now the Right Hon. Sir Albert Spicer, Bart.), and others, but the main brunt of it fell on his shoulders. Meetings were held in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Northampton, Cambridge, and other centres at which the scheme was explained and the appeal made. Fairbairn threw himself into the work of advocating the scheme with immense energy. He had, as it were, already burnt his boats and identified himself and his fortunes with the enterprise. He had made himself thoroughly acquainted with the situation in Oxford, and was able to reassure the fears of the timid and to show the necessity for some such movement as was suggested, if Nonconformity was ever to hold its own in the university. He had to overcome much prejudice and misunderstanding based mainly on ignorance, and some active opposition, especially at Cambridge and among Cambridge men. But he succeeded, and the best testimony to his success is the fact that when the new building was opened some three years later, all the money then required had been obtained. Such opposition as there was gradually died down as the true nature of the scheme came to be known. It had been largely based on the assumption that Mansfield would be a Residential Hall, which would withdraw its students from the general life of the university. When it was known that it was rather to be a post-graduate and non-residential theological school, and that its students would all be members of the university, and have access to other lectures than those given within its own walls, much criticism was disarmed. As to the fear that the Oxford atmosphere would alienate the students and undermine their loyalty to their principles, that was a risk which had to be taken. The event has abundantly shown how unreal it was.

Fairbairn removed to Oxford in the spring of 1886. For the next three years he occupied a house, Backworth,

at the corner of Banbury and Bevington Roads. He wrote of it to his mother in February, 1886 :

" We have been to Oxford and got a house. We shall leave about the end of April, and settle in our new home, which we hope may be as happy as our old one. It is a big house—larger than we need, but we could get no other. Yet it looks so much more cramped and confined than our house here."

For the college temporary premises had been taken at 90 High Street. They had interesting historical associations, having been occupied by King Charles I during the siege of Oxford, and later having housed the Oxford Union Society in the days when Gladstone was among its members. These rooms, and the house in Banbury Road, soon became a centre and rallying point for the Nonconformists in the university. During the fifteen years that had elapsed since the repeal of the Test Act the number of these had grown but slowly. At the time that Mansfield was founded the graduates and undergraduates who were avowed Nonconformists were less than fifty. Some few years previously they had established a society called the Nonconformist Union. Its aims were to remove the feeling of isolation among the Free Churchmen in the university, and to defend and propagate the principles of religious equality. Meetings were held on Sunday evenings for the discussion of religious and social questions, and occasional sermons by leading preachers were arranged in different churches in the town. The President was Prof. Bryce, and the first Vice-Presidents were Prof. T. H. Green and Prof. Legge. Among its more active members were Mr. W. J. Ashley, Mr. Ryland Adkins, Mr. R. F. Horton, Mr. J. King, Mr. A. H. D. Acland, and several younger dons, some of whom are now leading members of the university. The society supplied a felt want, and did a good deal to prepare the way for the work which Fairbairn was to take up.

By most of these men Fairbairn's advent and the founding of Mansfield were warmly welcomed. The Nonconformist Union, which by that time had changed its name to " The Society for the Promotion of Religious Equality " and was almost moribund, was dissolved by common consent, and its work was handed over to the new college. Until the chapel was built Fairbairn made his appeal to the more thoughtful type of undergraduate by means of Sunday evening lectures on various aspects of apologetic and philosophical theology. These were very largely attended from the first, and in the Oxford of those days they met a very real need. Agnosticism of a not very intelligent type was then the fashion, and Fairbairn's vigorous handling of the historical and metaphysical problems at the root of Christianity was as effective as it was novel. In the opinion of many who heard him then, he never did better work. These early years in Oxford were a very strenuous time. He was often far from well, through a return of his old internal complaint, but this hardly seemed to curtail his activities. He superintended the building of the college, visiting it daily, and taking the keenest interest in every detail. At the same time he had to run about the country appealing for the necessary funds. He lectured to his students five days in the week and gave himself to them freely in private. He was often away preaching on the Sundays, and necessary social engagements in Oxford consumed much precious time. In his college work he was loyally backed up by his only colleague Mr. John Massie, who had come with him from Spring Hill, but much of his work was not of a kind that he could delegate to others, and he gave himself to it ungrudgingly. That he felt the burden to be almost too great is evident from his letters, though he made little or no complaint. He was greatly encouraged, however, by the amount of support he met with in the university. The then Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Jowett, of Balliol, was very friendly and helped him

in many ways, especially in the matter of the site. The same is true of Dr. Hatch, his close personal friend, who along with Profs. Sanday, Driver, and Cheyne, whose lectures the students attended, most generously supplied the deficiencies in the teaching power of the new college. He began his work with but half a dozen students. The number steadily increased each year, and by the time the new buildings were opened, had grown to twenty-six. But probably none of his men ever saw so much of Fairbairn personally as that first little band. He seemed to share the burden of the new work with them, and made them feel the responsibility of laying down the traditions of the college that was yet to be. They felt, in a sense, that they were helping him to make history, and there was an interest, and even a glamour about the process, that none of them will ever quite forget.

Before the building was completed a fire broke out in the new Principal's house and greatly delayed the work. Fairbairn wrote of it to his sisters (February 15, 1889) :

" You may see from the papers that we have had a fire at Mansfield. It has been a great grief to us and will delay our entrance into our house by six months. However, it can't be helped, and we must be thankful that it was no worse. It is bad enough as it is : to have seen a building rise under one's own very eye : to have come to love it almost as if it were a living thing, and then to see it burned and wasted is one of the painfullest things possible. Only the roof and the bedroom floors are badly injured, and once they get to work all will be soon and thoroughly repaired. We had a very bad day yesterday, but we are now getting up our spirit again, and we shall hope to be happy before long. Only we were so tired of our house and so hopeful of getting into the new one that it will be some time before we settle down."

The college was opened on October 15, 1889. It was a great day for English Congregationalism, and leading representatives of that body attended in large numbers from all over the country. Scotland and the Presby-

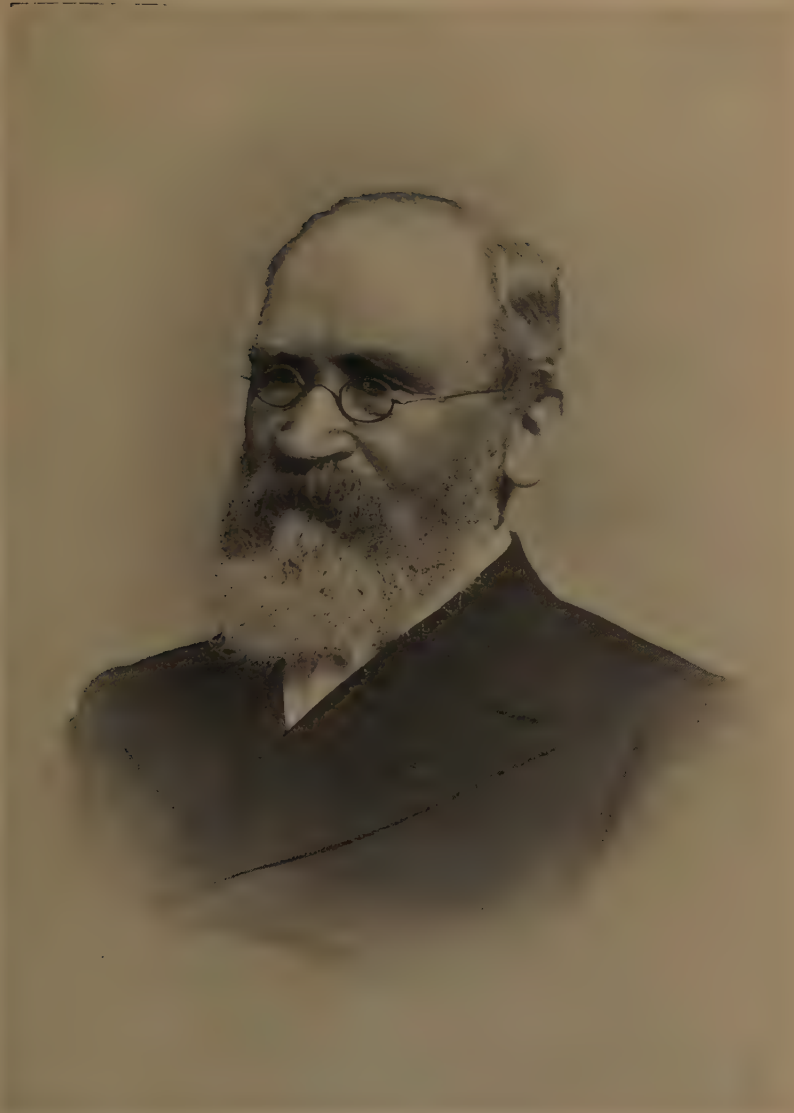

*Photo: Elliot & Fry*

PRINCIPAL OF MANSFIELD COLLEGE

terian churches were represented by Profs. Blackie and Bruce and by Principal Cairns, America by Dr. Ray Palmer, and Australia by various lay delegates. The opening sermon was preached by Dr. Dale and the inaugural address delivered by Fairbairn. This was entirely worthy of the occasion. Though it occupied an hour and a half in delivery, the interest of the audience in it never flagged, as they followed out what was really a magnificent justification of the policy which had led to the founding of Mansfield. After a masterly survey of the history of Oxford and her colleges and of their relation to religion and religious institutions, and after explaining the kind of theological school Mansfield was intended to be, Fairbairn proceeded :

" But now let us see how a college with the constitution and function of Mansfield stands related to a university so conceived. The university is now open to England : she is free to our sons : they have entered in, and where they are we would be. It is love that brings us, love of our people, of our sons, of our struggles in the past, our hopes for the future of the university we are once more free to call our own. Our fathers loved these classic groves, the memories that hallowed, the fellowship that endeared, the studies that consecrated ancient hall and cloistered college : they went out sadly, and with many a backward look, as men who loved, not Oxford less, but conscience more. And the teaching of their love lived in their houses and blossomed in their sons into efforts, now to replace, now to regain the lost seats. They built in obscure places academies that made now a learned, and again an illustrious, man, but commonly men fit for the rude work they must do who have fallen on ' evil days and evil tongues.' Two centuries and a decade passed, and then the university was opened ; and we have come to resume under forms suitable to our century, the work of our fathers within sight of the spires and under the shadow of the towers they knew so well.

" But our coming means much more than this. It means that new relations, sympathies, affinities are being

established, and will be maintained and extended, between the university and large sections of the English people. Of old there was estrangement, ignorance, suspicion: the university did not know the men, nor the men the university. On the one hand there were the power and the will to exclude, on the other the feeling that the exclusion was the denial of a rudimentary civil right, a sense of wrong all the deeper that the academic disability was a form of civil interference with religious liberty. Now it is a matter of supreme importance that the old estrangement should cease and the new reconciliation be complete. A university can benefit a people only as it trusts and is trusted: its beneficence will be measured by its benevolence, and the good received will be in proportion to the respect and reverence in which it is held. Now the rise of Mansfield means the creation, in once suspicious and estranged classes, of confidence and interest. The men who have built the college, the families whose sons here study, the churches who draw hence their ministry will come to feel for the university the joy of those who possess a great inheritance, impersonal as the State, yet personal as those they love. And the university, finding its schools frequented by a race of honest scholars, earnest, purposeful, capable, will come to feel that its thought and learning have been enriched, its tone raised, and its character broadened. Then, indeed, a great process of national unification may go on, and our much divided people come to feel a single people once more. Men who learn to respect each other in the college and the school will not cease to respect each other when they differ in the senate and the forum, in the Church or in the State. We cannot believe that differences will cease. I will not pretend to think that it would be good if they did. While minds are differently constituted, men will differ; but there is no reason why difference should beget hate—nay rather every possible reason why men, the more they differ, should seek the more to love. And to make this possible, when it has never been possible before, were a work worthy of the universities, full of richest promise to the churches and the people of England."[1]

[1] *Mansfield College: Its Origin and Opening*, p. 125.

The address was followed by various other functions at which the college was warmly welcomed to Oxford by Dr. Jowett, Master of Balliol; Dr. Fowler, President of Corpus; Dr. Jackson, Rector of Exeter; Dr. Edwin Hatch, and Sir William Markby. Dr. Jowett spoke of the occasion as a "great festival of union and reconciliation." All the speeches showed real appreciation of the fact that Mansfield had come to Oxford, not in any way to rival the older colleges, but to supplement their work in the special department of theology, and to form a religious home and centre for a class of undergraduates whose needs were not fully met by the ministrations of the college chapels. The welcome was all the more cordial because it was recognised that Fairbairn's learning and personality had already won for him a place of his own in the university. An institution of which he was the head found in that fact alone its chief recommendation.

The opening ceremonies were widely reported and commented on in the public press. The *Times*, the *Spectator*, and the *Guardian* were especially generous in their appreciation, and many other papers followed suit. But in all this chorus of congratulation there was perhaps a pardonable note of exaggeration which in certain circles was made the most of. The *Saturday Review* was derisive and satirical after its wont; and that champion of stern, unbending Toryism, Prof. Case,[1] wrote to the *Times* as follows:

"In a leading article this morning you speak of the opening of Mansfield College as 'a new epoch in the history of the University of Oxford.' I am sure you will allow me to point out to many of your readers, who are old-fashioned members of the Church of England, that this college has no connection whatever with the university. It cannot therefore be said, in the words of your article, that it is 'the resumption within the broad bosom of Alma Mater of

[1] Now President of Corpus.

that element of Nonconformity which constitutes so considerable a portion of our national life.' The truth is that Mansfield College is a Congregationalist seminary built within the precincts of the borough of Oxford."

The best answer to Professor Case was given, curiously enough, by the *Church Times*, which in a very friendly article wrote :

" Something must be said about the relations of Mansfield College with the University. Much misapprehension prevails upon this point. So far as legal technicalities go Prof. Case's statement is strictly correct. But if we regard the scheme of Mansfield College and the success which from an academical point of view has already attended it, we think that the generous but vague language of the *Times* is really much more true to the facts. For years past Nonconformists have been welcome at Oxford, but as Nonconformists they have had no outward and visible expression of their religious position. Mansfield College, then, brings Nonconformists as Nonconformists into the wide stream of Oxford life. But Mansfield College does not take undergraduates : it is not a chartered college ; it is in no way on the footing of Keble and Hertford except that in its actual working it may do very much for Nonconformists what these two colleges do for churchmen."

A more kindly comment on the situation was provided by the wit of certain undergraduates in the shape of a cartoon. It represented a suggestion for a window in the chapel, in which Fairbairn, rather wickedly caricatured and with a halo round his head, was the central figure, flanked on either side by one of his younger colleagues. Beneath them was the inscription :

> " Ecce superstitio pedibus subjecta vicissim
> Opteritur, nos exæquat victoria cœlo."

Quite another point of view is to be found in the comments of a certain Scotch paper, which only gave expression to fears which were felt elsewhere. It wrote :

" Instead of Mansfield conquering Oxford, it is a thousand times more likely that Oxford will swallow Mansfield. There are two ever potent influences in the Oxford atmosphere—as there are to some extent in every university centre—against which the energy and the ' free ' dogmas of Mansfield must fight in vain ; and these are what we must call its ' culture ' (for want of a better name), which steadily makes, and must make, against a pronounced and ' robust theology ' ; and its curious social quality, which rules it ' bad form ' to be identified with, or even to touch, dissent. And of the two we do not doubt that the latter will be found the stronger. The Nonconformist young man may go up to Oxford fully resolved to be true to the faith delivered to him by the chapel and to obey his parents' instructions to choose his companions among those of his own sectarian household, and above all things to stick to his books and acquire scholarship ; but, if he be not a fool, he soon discovers that greater than scholarship, more insidious even than social rank, is the university ' tone,' the university habit of thought, habit of conduct, habit of speech and outlook which fight as overwhelmingly against all the dissidence of dissent as the stars in their courses fought against Sisera."

Even the *British Weekly*, then just at the beginning of its long and successful career, considered that if Mansfield were to continue on the lines on which it began it " would become in a short time a pillar of the Church of England."

Looking back now over the past five-and-twenty years, it is easy to see how the life and work of the college have amply justified the high hopes of Fairbairn and confounded his critics. This was very largely due to the wisdom with which he guided its affairs during the early years. In fitting himself and his college into the environment of Oxford, he showed a resource and a versatility that were really surprising in a man of his antecedents. He insisted from the first on a very high standard of scholarship, and the long list of university successes won by his students, and the number of them now occupying positions of academic distinction, give ample evidence of the fact. But

he also laid no less stress on making the college a real centre of religious life. To keep up a high level of devotion and of preaching in the chapel services, was his constant concern. Men whom he gathered round him from time to time, took their full part in shaping that development of practical religion which is one of the most marked features in the Oxford of to-day. It was always an axiom with him that Nonconformity was never really strong or unassailable, save when deeply rooted in religious conviction and experience. That he acted on this principle throughout was one main secret of his success.

To undergraduates outside the circle of Mansfield Fairbairn was always accessible, and many an one of them can look back to a time when he owed everything to counsel which Fairbairn gave him. He never lost the warm interest in men which had distinguished him as a pastor, and he had a practical sagacity which made his advice very welcome. Of Fairbairn's work at Mansfield the Right Hon. Viscount Bryce writes :

" Few public men of our time have ever been placed in a more delicate position than was Dr. Fairbairn when Mansfield College, of which he was the Principal, was transferred from its previous home to Oxford and set down in the midst of a university which had been not long before the traditional seat of old-fashioned conservatism in politics, and of an exclusively Anglican or Episcopalian type in ecclesiastical matters. Those who knew Oxford but did not know Dr. Fairbairn felt very many doubts as to the success of the step taken even when they felt that the step ought to be taken. These doubts were soon removed. Had the head of the new Nonconformist college been aggressive or defiant or shown the smallest wish to push it or himself ' into the limelight ' hosts of jealousies, suspicions, and animosities would soon have arisen. But he showed a judgment and good sense and good feeling beyond all praise. The opening of the college brought together many eminent men, some few of them eminent Oxford men, every word spoken was well spoken and well taken in Oxford. The Principal entered naturally

and simply into the life of the university, maintaining in all things his independence, and championing his views when occasion required it, disarming any possible antagonism by a consistent manliness and courtesy, and winning the respect of all that was best in Oxford. His learning and his literary gifts had from the first commended him to the theological and historical scholars of the place. Lord Acton, the most learned Englishman then living, once said to me that he doubted if there was anyone in the university whose learning equalled Fairbairn's. Nowhere did one meet more interesting men or listen to better talk than in the Mansfield common room during his time. Decided as were his own political convictions, he never sought to identify the college with them, or let it become a stronghold of any party either ecclesiastical or political. He was in fact an ideal Principal in his calmness, his tact, his perception of what was the true and useful policy for the college to follow. Of his loyalty to his friends, of the uprightness he showed in all he did, of the unwearied industry by which he accumulated so much learning and was able to produce so many books full of thought as well as of knowledge, the record of his life contains such ample evidence as to make any outside testimony superfluous."

With the opening of the college buildings it became necessary to increase the staff, and two tutors were appointed, Mr. Vernon Bartlet to teach Church History and Mr. W. B. Selbie to teach Hebrew and Old Testament. After a year's time Mr. Selbie was appointed to a church, and his place was taken first by Mr. A. S. Peake, and a little later by Mr. Buchanan Gray. Along with Mr. Massie, Messrs. Bartlet and Gray, with the addition later of Mr. G. W. Thatcher, constituted the staff of the college for many years. Fairbairn found in them the most loyal and faithful of colleagues. The younger men among them had all been his pupils, and they lived to carry out to the full the high ideals of scholarship which he had set before them.

It may be convenient at this point to give some account

of Fairbairn's system and method as a teacher of theology. He had by this time fully elaborated his scheme of work, and he never materially altered it. He was enthusiastic about his subject and believed in it. To him theology was always the queen of the sciences, and every other study had to pay her tribute. To his first-year students he generally used to give a term of lectures on what he called Theological Encyclopædia. This was a most elaborate survey of the whole field, more after the German manner. But, though German in its range and thoroughness, the subject, in Fairbairn's hands, was never dry. He had an amazing knowledge even of the obscurest lights in the theological firmament, and his vivid and Carlylesque characterisations of theologians and their work kept the interest of his hearers fully alive. From this subject he used to proceed to lectures on theism and anti-theistic theories. He dealt historically and critically with the stock arguments for the Being of God, giving to them the form and interpretation which best fitted in with his own Hegelian world view. To men innocent of philosophy, this course was very difficult, but to those who had read philosophy, and especially to those who had passed through the Oxford Greats School or taken a philosophy course in a Scotch university, it came as a real illumination, a fit coping-stone to all their previous work. The positive Theism was followed by a critical discussion of Agnosticism, Pantheism, Pessimism, Positivism, *et hoc genus omne*. In criticism Fairbairn was very much at home. He was shrewd, remorseless, thorough, and not always as fair as he meant to be. His work on systematic theology he generally took in the following order. The Doctrines of God and of the Godhead, the latter comprising the Doctrines of the Person of Christ and of the Holy Spirit. The Doctrines of Man, Sin, and Atonement, of Inspiration and Revelation, of the Church and the Kingdom. In addition to these he had occasional courses on Philosophy of Religion, Comparative Religion, and the History of

English Puritanism. His treatment of all these subjects was historical and critical, rather than constructive. He had an immense and minute knowledge of the history, and he used to light it up with brilliant characterisations and criticisms of the great teachers and opponents of the church. But his students were made sometimes to feel the lack of that constructive endeavour which he seemed always to promise but never quite to reach. The fact was that he was so sure of his own ground, and had so clear a conception of the standpoint from which all his teaching started, that he did not himself feel the need for definite pronouncements at the end of every course. He did not readily grasp the fact that other minds were duller than his and were apt to lose the wood in the trees. Looking back upon it all now, however, especially in the light of his writings, one can have no doubt as to where he stood and as to the fundamentally constructive nature of his work. A more pertinent criticism is that which suggests that he stopped short at the point to which his own early investigations had led him, and never moved much further. As has already been indicated, the religious crisis through which he had himself passed conditioned his thinking ever afterwards. The enemies he had to meet were always clothed in the same armour as those of his earlier days, and his mind was dominated to the end by the influence of the problems with which he had himself been compelled to wrestle. As new problems emerged he was apt to regard them as irrelevant, if not impertinent. Thus he always seemed to move in the thought world of Dorner and Hegel, and was never quite at home with Ritschl, Wellhausen, and Harnack.

To Ritschl and his school he was certainly not quite just, and though his work with his students prepared them for these later developments, they had to follow them up under his impulse rather than under his personal guidance. The work which some of them have done in these fields shows that they were not

ill-prepared. In spite of these limitations, however, and indeed in some sense because of them, Fairbairn's work and method were peculiarly timely and useful in Oxford. The theological school, when he first began to teach there, was far too historical and textual in method, and was sadly limited in range. Systematic theology proper was hardly known in it, and it had no place for philosophy of religion or for the comparative study of religions. Fairbairn was a systematic and dogmatic theologian in the best sense of the terms, and to him theology was altogether vain, save in so far as it could be rooted and grounded in philosophy. In his own class-room he never suffered this high ideal to be departed from and, as we shall see later, he did something, though not by any means so much as he desired, to influence theological teaching in the university.

He was accustomed to write his lectures out and to read them pretty closely. The subject was carefully divided up into paragraphs and sections, and the divisions and subdivisions were so elaborate as sometimes to defeat their own end and obscure, rather than clarify, his theme. But he was never tied to his manuscript, and, ever and again, used to break out into extempore disquisitions that were always illuminating, and sometimes arrestingly eloquent. He welcomed questions, but they must be real and serious. If they were trifling and asked merely to interrupt or waste time, they got very short shrift. He used also to hold informal seminars, after the German fashion, and in these his wealth of knowledge and powers of exposition were seen at their best.

Of this part of his work an American student who attended the college for a short time in its first year, wrote the following description :—

" Every Friday evening the men meet at his house for a ' Seminar.' I attended the first meeting of the winter term, when plans were discussed for the season. Short papers were assigned to several men in the line of their

special researches. Other practical subjects were selected for future discussion. That evening the question of the 'Relation of Means to Ends' was talked over in a pleasant, informal way; Dr. Fairbairn beginning, and each man having the chance to say something, if he liked. Many fresh ideas were brought out, and the discussion was really delightful. During the evening the Principal read several extracts from Jonathan Edwards, by whom he seemed to be singularly impressed. Dr. Fairbairn's comments were full of spirituality. One could see that this Seminar was the best means for bringing together teacher and pupil. The majority of the students seem to be men of high scholarship. Many are doing special work in Hebrew, Greek, and Church History. Indeed, Mansfield can no longer be looked upon as an experiment —it is an achievement, and on this work already achieved are founded its hopes for a steadily brightening future."

In his sermon classes quite another side of Fairbairn was seen. He was both severe and sympathetic as a critic. He drew largely on his own early experiences as preacher and pastor, of which he used to speak in the simplest and most moving fashion. To flippancy and laziness he was merciless, and more than once men were known to break down utterly under the weight of his wrath. The Christian ministry was to him so high and serious a business, that nothing could excuse indifference or lack of effort in preparing for it. And he set, himself, an example of passionate earnestness, devotion, and high endeavour which his students could not but appreciate. In his personal dealings with them he was kindness itself. He took the keenest interest in their doings and fortunes long after they had left the college. Letters to his old students in reply to requests for his help and advice formed no small part of his vast correspondence. Most of them are too personal for publication, but they show clearly enough the estimation in which his men held "the old Doctor," and the readiness with which he spent himself in their service. His relation with his men was

to him a very real pastorate, and he used to say that he never knew what the burden of pastoral care meant until he became head of a college. When the present writer visited him a few weeks before his death, his last words in saying good-bye were, " Remember me to the men."

A few weeks after the opening of Mansfield Fairbairn suffered a great personal loss in the death of Dr. Edwin Hatch. Unlike as they were in almost every respect, the two men had much in common, and during a comparatively short acquaintance had become closely attached to each other. At the close of a fine tribute which he paid to his friend in the college chapel, Fairbairn said :

" Permit only a word or two as to the man. It is not easy to speak here with just frankness yet with becoming reserve of a man we have learned to love. Yet if I had not loved him I could not have dared to speak of him here. With what he seemed on the public arena we are not concerned : with what he was as a man and a friend we are. He could be, and often was, swift and sharp in speech, but nothing more marked him than the gentle and even generous way he judged the men to whom he was opposed. He was a devout and reverent man : indeed, I have known few things more touching than the simple devoutness of some of his spontaneous family prayers. He did not love an academic or cloistered religion ; he was anxious that men who were being trained in religious knowledge should be exercised in religious service. He followed with keenest sympathy and approval the efforts to reach the lapsed, to rescue the fallen, to apply the healing touch and ameliorative spirit of religion to our social diseases and depravities. Nor are these judgments simply mine. A friend, a learned and capable teacher of men, who had heard him described as hard, unspiritual, negative, a mere comparative anatomist of bodies ecclesiastical, came to know him, to stay in the same house with him, and to see him under the most searching lights that can fall upon the spirit and character of a man, and now writes to me : ' I cannot tell you what a gratification it is to me that I thus learned to know

and value him. I had previously no right conception of his honesty and truth and earnestness, or of that gentleness, which softened all. I shall now treasure his memory as a sacred trust, and hope that it may help me to try to be more like him.' So he became to men that saw him face to face: to men who looked from a distance he was the scholar, the historical student, the teacher, the man whose methods and conclusions men of large repute had disapproved: but to men who knew him from within he was a veracious, high-minded, tender-hearted friend, wise in counsel, candid in speech, helping the man that trusted him to bear his burden and to do his work in the world. His loss has impoverished our present, but has enriched our past with happy memories, and our future with sacred hopes."

When Dr. Hatch died he was engaged in preparing for the press his Hibbert lectures on "The Influence of Greek ideas and usages upon the Christian Church." Fairbairn was asked by the Hibbert Trustees to complete the work, and with the help of Mr. Bartlet and Prof. Sanday he published the lectures in 1890. It was to him a real labour of love. Among the many benefactions which Mansfield received in these early days nothing pleased Fairbairn more than the gift to the library of some two hundred volumes from the library of Dr. Hatch. It was made by a number of his Oxford friends,[1] who wrote to Fairbairn as follows:

"This letter accompanies a little collection of books which we, whose names are inscribed, beg you to accept for the library at Mansfield. Their presence on your shelves will, we hope, serve to remind you of Dr. Hatch, to whom they belonged, and of the goodwill which he bore to your college. Some of us who have of late been concerned in commemorating him in another way, desire

[1] Their names were: B. Jowett, J. Percival, T. Fowler, D. B. Monro, W. W. Jackson, H. G. Wood, W. Markby, W. H. Fremantle, A. S. Farrar, T. K. Cheyne, J. S. Burdon-Sanderson, H. Nettleship, H. F. Pelham, R. W. Macan, A. Sidgwick, A. Robinson, T. W. Jackson, W. Sanday, W. S. Hatch.

to take this opportunity of expressing our sense of the very cordial co-operation which we have received both from you and from other members of the bodies represented by Mansfield College. In the hope that there may not be wanting among its students men who will work at Dr. Hatch's subjects with something of his science, thoroughness, and devotion, we remain, etc."

In acknowledging this letter, Fairbairn wrote to Dr. Sanday:

"The gift you have forwarded to our Library is so fit and so valued, and the spirit which has prompted it is so gracious that I feel the simplest word of thanks to be the best. I need not assure you that there is no name we are so glad to be able to associate with the thought and work of our college as the name of Dr. Hatch. Without him it might never have been founded, and most certainly without his counsel as a friend and his co-operation as a scholar and teacher its organisation would not have been so easy and so happy as it has hitherto proved. In a true sense, which you will not misunderstand, he was one of the founders of Mansfield; and your gift enables us to perpetuate his name in connection with the college he helped to found. Please convey to the gentlemen whose names you kindly specify, my simple heartfelt gratitude."

Amid the bustle of preparation for settling in Oxford Fairbairn was summoned north by the sudden illness and death of his mother. He wrote to his wife on May 6, 1886, from Edinburgh:

"She was at Dalkeith this day fortnight very happy and bright, rallying everybody. She had proposed to my Uncle John's wife—a faded beauty of other days—that they should take a stall in the exhibition. She would bake scones and my aunts, with ringlets down, should sell them, and so they would be made and sold by ladies of the old generation. On the Wednesday of last week she took a severe cold. They blistered her, and on the Thursday she got up quite well. On Monday night about midnight she fainted, and hence

the telegram to me. But next morning no warning was given by the doctor, though he was anxious that I should be informed. In the afternoon, half an hour before she died, she rose out of the bed quite briskly, and when the end came it was so sweet and calm that it seemed a sleep or a faint. She died in Jack's arms. She was clear to the last—had wished to see me as she had seen the others—but said she was satisfied, as indeed she had shut her eyes and seen me. I was there.

"She looks very beautiful, so unchanged, so like herself, and yet so wonderfully calm and pleasantly peaceful that one feels how good could she ever remain so! Her loss makes many things different. Scotland will be less home now, let us hope heaven more."

The following letter to his sisters also refers to his mother:

"*December* 31, 1886.

"This is the first New Year you have been without our mother; but she is only absent in the body, being present all the more in spirit. To be without her voice and face is not to be without her blessing: on us it remains to be to our day dutiful as she was to hers. Do not look back with regret, but with thankfulness. We had her so long that we feel as if we ought to have had her for ever; but as she was spared for our good, she was taken for her own and for ours as well. We ought to think of the long years of possession with gratitude, of the late removal with thankfulness, because it was so long delayed and was so peaceful."

During his visits to Birmingham and Oxford, in order to prepare the way for Mansfield, Fairbairn wrote to his wife as follows:

"OXFORD,

"*October* 31, 1885.

"I had no time before post yesterday to tell you anything. The journey was, as usual, monotonous. Everything went well till, just at the end, to everybody's amusement and my own dismay, I put my shoulder through the window. If you had seen me—horror and

dismay as glass fell and rattled all round. Dale was waiting for me, but crowd was great, I very hot and hasty, and was away before he could find me. I had a cab and drove to the meeting which was held in a stuffy vestry, but was large and in good spirit. Negotiations are in progress for site; the speech was well received; suggestions apparently went well down, and we all had tea together before breaking up. Dale and I had a long talk together and many things became clear. Everything seems promising, though he urges me to come at Easter, which we must do if removal here in October is to be carried out. But this will depend on how much money is got together before Christmas. So we must wait till then to see what has been forthcoming.

"Mrs. Dale is in bed, so did not see her. Came on here this forenoon, in pouring rain. Ever since I got into Birmingham yesterday it has been pouring in torrents and so Oxford looks its worst. Ashley has nice rooms; made me cordially welcome: was no sooner there than King came in, followed by Matheson—all lively and interested. At one went to the Vice-Chancellor's, had a long *tête-à-tête* with him—very interested, glad I am coming. Suggested I should write a letter to him, which he will read to the Council, explaining the purpose and notion of the college. He made other most important suggestions, holding out hope that we may find subjects in theology so altered as to allow our men to graduate. Were that possible our success would soon be assured."

"*November* 1, 1885.

"Your letters all to hand. I have little to say—am so tired. Yesterday evening dined with Prof. Bryce, met Prof. Drummond, of Glasgow, Freeman the historian, and others. Then went on to meeting. But Bryce made a most awkward mistake. He held the meeting was at 9, when it was at 8.15. We were going when young M—— met us with the news that people had been waiting more than half an hour. We hurried there, I quite blown and breathless, when I had in hot haste to begin my speech. It was unfortunate, and gave us a bad start from which I never quite recovered. We had at the close quite a long and interesting debate. Some took the old Cambridge ground.

Fremantle, canon of the Church, was specially strong on this point. But, on the whole, result was good. All criticism was expressed and matter stated as well as possible. It, however, made me realise to the full the difficulties of the situation, and convinced me of how much must be borne and attempted before our work can be accomplished.

"To-day Ashley had quite a lot of young fellows to breakfast, and we had a thoroughly good and instructive talk. After breakfast we heard the Bishop of Carlisle preach, and then went for a walk. We saw Dr. Legge, and I have got information as to schools, but shall seek more before coming home. To-day has been very wearying. I am indeed dreadfully tired, having seen as many men as ought to satisfy the most curious. Yet of the finest and best was a high churchman named Gore. He is head of a religious house[1] in the city, and I got some valuable hints from him as to what may be attempted and how."

"In the Train,

"*November* 2, 1885.

"On my way to the great Capital. Very busy and very tired—but a good night's rest has, on the whole, made the world and man pleasanter. I enjoyed staying in college and meeting the men—it was all very agreeable and bright. Yesterday after writing I went to chapel in Lincoln College with Ashley, and very much enjoyed the service. After dinner we had an agreeable talk in the Common Room—very pleasant young fellows all—though full of the spirit and aspiration of the place, so unlike—and not altogether for good—our braver and bracier north. Heard a sermon by Gore, earnest, direct, suitable to young men—but at the same time not much in it—freely delivered and impressive. Went then to meeting of the Nonconformist Union. King read a very good paper, nicely conceived and expressed, full of his own spirit of gentleness, though rash in theological statement. Yet no evil would, I think, follow. Indeed he told me, when I rather reprimanded him to-day, that he meant it for some young fellows who were in trouble, and

[1] The Pusey House.

he was perhaps right. This morning I breakfasted at Underhill's. He is a fine fellow, had Macfadyen's eldest son and some other undergrads. This meeting did as much as any of them to enlighten young fellows—even to inspire with some enthusiasm for purpose and aim of the scheme. Went afterwards to see Dr. Murray (Dictionary Murray). He has just come to Oxford and will be a man on whom we may rely in our time of need."

The following letter was written to the chairman of a meeting of the Cambridge Nonconformist Union at which the Mansfield scheme had been severely criticised:

"OXFORD,
*May* 27, 1886.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Now that I have returned home and had time calmly to review the events of last Sunday evening, I feel that it may be as well to write in all friendliness a perfectly frank letter to you. I hope I have not paid my last visit to the Cambridge Union, or ended my intercourse with yourself, but that our future relations may be happy I must be quite free and explicit now. The good feeling that is not based on mutual understanding is not good at all.

"I will not say that I was gratified either with the proceedings or the result of Sunday evening. It was not the speaking that was at fault. Your own speech was indeed something more than unfortunate, but you apologised, and I cordially accepted, and accept, the apology. Yet I am not quite clear that you saw where the main offence lay. It was not in its personal allusions, though I regretted these for your sake rather than for my own. In such things it is always the junior and not the senior that suffers. What was more serious, and distressed me more, was to see how your anxiety to make a point caused you to overlook a principle, as when you failed to see that the position from which my speech started, that 'the Universities now knew no Established Church,' involved the consequence that, while I confessed myself 'a dissenter from the Established Church,' I was neither a dissenter nor a Nonconformist to the

Universities. This is with me a fundamental principle, the logical result of the abolition of Tests, secured as an ideal, to be translated into a reality by such enterprises as ours. But these things were incidental; the main fault was this: you were the chairman of a meeting which was called to receive guests; but you delivered a speech that implied throughout that your guests were there for controversial purposes, and that your function as chairman was, while ostensibly moving a vote of thanks, to move and lead the meeting to support a negative to their affirmative. And everything, the presence of the reporters, the order of speakers, the letter of Mr. Cox, and the information on which it had been based, showed that the meeting had been prepared for and arranged from this point of view. This was the initial fault, the source of every other. We were not there on a controversial mission, nothing would have induced us to come on one. I had never recognised, and do not recognise now, that we had any controversy with the Cambridge Nonconformist Union. What they had condemned we had never proposed, and their resolutions had helped us to get from the Charity Commissioners what otherwise we might not have obtained, yet what, if we had not obtained, would have made Mansfield not possible. For this service I had the liveliest sense of gratitude to the Union, and came both to express it and put them in possession of actual knowledge about Mansfield. They did not know what was proposed, nor the reasons for it; and the reasons were needed to explain both the range and nature of the scheme. That scheme is a great deal broader than you had or have any conception of, or gave us any opportunity of making fully evident. Speaking with the fullest knowledge of all the University Theological Faculties, and all the Theological Colleges in the United Kingdom, I say there is nothing nearly so generous and so catholic. We contemplate the attendance not only of Congregational, Baptist, and Methodist, but even of Episcopalian students; and from inquiries already made to us, we shall not be without students who are studying for the Church, but wish to know Independency from within. The professorial test does not stand there with our will; if it had been possible to remove it, it would

have been removed. But nothing short of an Act of Parliament could have secured its removal; and many things made that an impossible alternative. Even as it stands, it is the most liberal statement as regards its doctrinal clauses any great institution was ever founded on.

"The reasons, again, for Mansfield are many, and often of a kind not easily apprehended by men in the undergraduate stage, or only just out of it. They concern the history of the Universities, their action on the nation, the tendencies and results of the Liberal educational legislation both in the Universities and the schools, the obligations imposed on us by the abolition of tests, the state of religious thought, the claims of the higher scholarship and the conditions necessary for their fulfilment, and the relation of our churches to the higher problems of theology, historical and sacred criticism and politics, the needs of our ministry and its relation to the educated intellect of England; in short, the reasons were so many and implied so extensive inquiries, so wide a range of experience, so varied and so complex considerations, that it was impossible that they could have been in all their breadth and bearings before the Union or any one of its members. And what was sought was not an opportunity for debate—for there were none of the conditions that would have allowed or justified one—but simply an occasion for explanation and exposition on the one side, and question and criticism on the other. This did not mean that the Union had nothing to teach us; on the contrary, it implied that we were anxious to consider the matter from its point of view, though not as in itself sole and decisive, but as one among many. Where the Union was able to speak with authority, I for one was ready to hear with all sympathy and respect; and the degree of my readiness stands expressed in my desire to come that I might both explain to you and learn of you. Thus, when you spoke about the probable or possible social effects of Mansfield, I heard with all respect, though I was prepared to show even from our own limited experience here that the view was probably false, and certainly exaggerated. But, suppose it was true to the uttermost, would it have been a reason strong

enough to outweigh all the others? And had our young men lost the chivalry and courage that would dare and endure the disagreeable for a great and holy enterprise?

"But I have written more than enough, and more argumentatively than I intended. Yet it was better, as you were so charged with responsibilities in connexion with the late meeting, that you should be put in possession of our point of view. It was an opportunity for mutual understanding such as rarely happens; it was not used as it might have been, or as I hoped it would be. Yet I am anxious that only good feeling should remain behind, and that the Nonconformists of Cambridge, graduate and undergraduate, should understand a movement that has their good at heart, and that has more promise of good for them and for the Free Churches of England than anything that has happened in the academic world since 1662.

"Very sincerely yours,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

Mr. P. E. Matheson, Fellow of New College, has kindly contributed the following impression of Dr. Fairbairn during the earlier years of his residence in Oxford:

"It is difficult," he writes, "looking back over a friendship of more than twenty years, to separate in one's mind the impressions of one period from the picture left by the complete experience, but I will try to recall some memories of the earlier time. I cannot remember my first meeting with him, nor the date of his actual settlement in Oxford, but I know that from early in 1886 I often saw him, and especially during the three years that Mansfield College was being built we had many walks and talks, which continued afterwards but became less frequent as years went on and we both became more occupied. We made friends from the first. I had long heard of him as a man who was the greatest intellectual force in the younger world of English Congregationalism (as Dr. Dale had been in the preceding generation) and when it was announced that he was to be the Principal of the new college I looked forward with hope and interest to his coming. I think we prob-

ably met first at a meeting of the Society for the Promotion of Religious Equality, a society of Oxford graduates and undergraduates which had—in the spirit of the times—grown out of the earlier Nonconformist Union and which was dissolved, having done its work, soon after Fairbairn's arrival in January, 1887. I find a record of a meeting of the Society on February 21, 1886, in Oriel, presided over by Mr. Bryce, who talked to us eloquently of the bearing of the study of Church history on Christian life. I doubt whether Fairbairn was at the meeting ; he was probably not yet in residence, but a few days afterwards I received and read his pamphlet on Mansfield College, which laid down the lines of the institution that was to be founded among us. A month or two later, just when the fritillaries were coming out in the Iffley meadows, I have a note of a meeting with Dr. Fairbairn and Dr. Dale, in which I suppose plans were discussed. Then or later in the year he asked me to serve on an advisory committee to discuss architects and plans, and we had many conversations over this in the course of the year. Then, as always, he accepted in the friendliest spirit my position as one who, brought up in Congregationalism, inclined to the Anglican communion and form of worship. Though on occasions he used strong language in criticism of extreme or unsound doctrine, this did not disturb his friendship with men of very various creeds : he was much more sympathetic in speech than in writing. On paper his strong views were apt to take the form sometimes of harsh and bitter attack ; in conversation the obvious sincerity and religious fervour of the man made even aggressive phrases less repellent. Looking back on those days, I recall lively discussions at College lunch parties or in Common Room, when he played a leading part : debates on College and Professorial teaching, on the philosophy of religion, and the many agitating topics that were rife in Oxford in the eighties. The social movement which T. H. Green and Arnold Toynbee had fostered was in full vigour, and much of the strength of young Oxford was going in that direction : Fairbairn had plenty of sympathy with this, and a few years later his college was to found a settlement of great influence and activity in Canning Town,

but his main interest was in the profounder issues of thought and character rather than in any particular sphere of conduct. That was what made him at once acceptable not only to professed theologians, but to the younger philosophers. They recognised in him a scholar of wide and varied learning, with an enthusiasm for Oxford and Oxford studies as keen as any of them could show, and a fuller knowledge than most possessed of the history of Oxford thought. Men like Mr. W. L. Courtney, the late David Ritchie, and Prof. Alexander —to name only some of those who are no longer teaching in Oxford—enjoyed a tussle of argument with him and roused his mettle. There were some who cavilled at the coming of the college, but many scholars and men of science welcomed him as an ally in the cause of learning and research. His talk was interesting from the width of his reading and the masterful vigour of his mind, but he had not much light play either in conversation or debate: here, as in his writing, he never moved with great ease. Like some champion of the Middle Ages his thoughts often seemed to labour under the load of his rhetorical armour; and his weapon was the battle-axe more often than the rapier.

"There was no doubt of the variety of his interests: early in his time here I find record of his speaking at the Oxford Goethe Society when the late Edwin Morshead was reading a paper on the 'Italiänische Reise': the next year he was lecturing on Pantheism: and all the while, month after month, he was following with the keenest interest the growth of his new buildings. First there was the choice of architect and design, then the usual period of critical consideration, and when the main plans were settled, the absorbing task of selecting the great masters of thought whose statues were to adorn the Chapel walls. Never were details of decoration more carefully studied. At each stage he was bent on doing and getting the best: giving to Oxford a building worthy of her history, and offering to the eyes of her sons the bodily presentment of great characters, which should arrest attention and suggest thought. I can remember still the high seriousness with which he discussed the choice of a cook or a porter, and the ritual of

his new Common Room. No one could fail to admire his persistence and energy, and his politic handling of the problem of winning a place in Oxford for his new society. On many a walk in and about this city I seem to hear the burden of his talk, now circling round the beloved topic of the Oxford movement, then returning again and again to the immediate need of making his college and his students worthy of their calling, of giving strength and comeliness and a good tradition to his infant society. His formal utterances in sermons, though wonderful achievements in their way, were I think to many of his hearers much less convincing than his less guarded utterances in conversation, especially when he was among men with whom he felt at home. Not seldom perhaps in the subtly critical atmosphere of Oxford he felt a stranger and ill at ease ; and at such moments he did not always express himself well. He needed a sympathetic audience. On such occasions even his monologue had a fascination when it was on a theme which moved him. Many years later I recall the rapt attention with which Mr. Gladstone heard him give a lucid epitome of the history of Presbyterianism and its later developments in England. The story was as new to Mr. Gladstone as that of Congregationalism was to many younger men in Oxford. And here it may be said that if Fairbairn was at times called impatient or aggressive, his critics might do well to remember that many of the churchmen who criticised him showed a very simple ignorance of his aims and creed, and of that element in the life of the nation which he and his college represented. It is true to say that his character and presence gave a fresh force to religious thought in Oxford : he presented religion and the Christian society in a new aspect, which appealed to many whom the religious side of Oxford had hitherto left cold or indifferent. Not least among the constructive factors of his influence was the wide range from which he drew the preachers and teachers whom he brought to address his students and the congregation of Mansfield. Not Scotland only but the United States and Canada from the first sent of their best, and no one in Oxford did more than Fairbairn to connect the English-speaking countries by ties of intellectual and religious

sympathy. In very early days I recall the visits of Dr. Noah Porter, the venerable President of Yale, and of Principal Grant of Toronto, and they were among the first of a long series of visitors whom Fairbairn made at home in Oxford. It would hardly be too much to say that the movement towards 'Christian union' among students to-day owes much to Fairbairn's wise policy of hospitality.

"It is hard to convey in a few words the part that he played in Oxford: the chief impression that comes back to one is that of a man who was always in close commerce with great ideas, a strong character, fierce with the fierceness of a fighting Puritan, but with an unsuspected strain of tenderness that did not easily find expression: a student with a passion for learning, and particularly for the works of those great masters whose clear-cut systems he found most congenial; with a sincere love of all good things and a profound faith in the spiritual life.

"He was fortunate in finding for his younger staff men trained in the Oxford schools and familiar with Oxford men and methods. Sometimes it might seem that he was inclined to treat them in too masterful a way, more as subordinates than as colleagues, but it was more a fault of manner than anything else, and from the first he won affection and respect. His influence, like that of all strong characters, was mixed: men did not always accept his doctrine, but they respected the man and they gained stimulus from his teaching. And the stimulus was felt not by his own pupils only but by younger scholars in Oxford who laughingly nicknamed him 'The Encyclopædia,' and delighted in his varied talk. Though he had not a very strong sense of humour he was not without it, and he had many good stories at command: he had known many men and seen life in many phases and his memory was good, so that he could draw from a rich store. To estimate such a man's influence in the life of any society is impossible, but the work that he achieved in those early years could only have been done by a scholar of strong personality and immense energy, who had also a profound belief in the claims of the religious life, and in the ideals of a great university."

# CHAPTER VII

## THEOLOGICAL WORK: CONSTRUCTIVE AND CONTROVERSIAL

### 1885–1895

DURING his early years at Oxford, when he was deeply immersed in business and administrative details, Fairbairn never lost sight of his main interest—the study and exposition of theology. He used to say indeed that his many engagements outside Oxford, his care of the churches and the like, had their use in preventing his absorption in the merely academic routine. They certainly in some respects reacted favourably upon his theology. The last thing that could ever be said of him was that he was a merely arm-chair theologian, taking only the point of view of the study and the class-room. All the time that he was laying down the lines of his work at Mansfield and subject to innumerable distractions of a practical and often rather petty kind, he was carrying on his self-appointed task of reconstructing Christian theology so as to meet the special needs of the time, though, as we have already seen, he was never able fully to realise the high aims he had set before himself. Still, whether it was by lectures to undergraduates at Oxford, or to mixed audiences at Chatauqua, or by the work of summer schools in this country, or by controversy with Catholics, Roman or Anglican, or by Congregational Union addresses, or by the writing of books, he was always pursuing the same end and carrying forward this the main object of his life. In 1885 he had begun writing a series of articles in the *Contemporary*

*Review* on various aspects of Catholicism. These he continued at intervals for some ten or twelve years and finally published in 1899 in a volume entitled *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*. The main body of the book is just what its title indicates, and though it is perhaps rather anticipating events to refer to it here, it may be well to do so, as it contains matter with which Fairbairn was greatly occupied during the whole period which we have now reached. Scotchman and Puritan though he was, the Anglo-Catholic revival had always had a fascination for him. The fact that the very constitution of his mind and faith made it the more difficult for him to understand it attracted him. Quite early in his career Newman's *Apologia* had appealed to him, as it did to so many others, and he would not rest until he had grasped, as far as might be, the secret of the man and of his teaching. He was deeply perplexed by the contrast between the real piety of the men who represented the Oxford movement, and their apparent insensibility to the finer and higher moralities of the mind. He recognised that they were as convinced in their way as he was in his, and he brought to the task of understanding them the sympathy born of that conviction. His criticism of them was never merely negative; he used it as a means of restating his own views on the Church and on religion, in terms which the revival of Catholicism seemed to demand. His whole treatment of the movement was a splendid and timely vindication of the Protestant position as he understood it. But it must be remembered that Fairbairn meant always by Catholicism not the Roman Church, but rather that movement which began with the revival of Anglicanism in Oxford, which had its Roman affinities and has so profoundly affected the recent course of religious history in this country.

Fairbairn's chief criticism of Newman was based on what he regarded as the essentially sceptical character

of the philosophy which underlay his system. He formulates it as follows :

" That philosophy may be described as one empirical and sceptical, qualified by a peculiar religious experience. He (i.e. Newman) has a deep distrust of the intellect : he dare not trust his own, for he does not know where it might lead him, and he will not trust any other man's. The mind ' must be broken in to the belief of a power above it ' ; to recognise the Creator is to have its ' stiff neck ' bent. The real problem of the *Grammar of Assent* is, How without the consent and warrant of the reason, to justify the being of religion, and faith in that infallible Church which alone realises it. The whole book is pervaded by the intensest philosophical scepticism : this supplies its *motif*, determines its problem, necessitates its distinctions, rules over the succession and gradation of its arguments. His doctrine of assents, his distinction into notional and real—which itself involves a philosophy of the most empirical individualism—his criticism of Locke, his theories of inference, certitude, and the illative sense, all mean the same thing. His aim is to withdraw religion and the proofs concerning it from the region of reason and reasoning into the realm of conscience and imagination, where the reasons that reign may satisfy personal experience without having objective validity or being able to bear the criticism that tests it. And so he feels, ' It is a great question whether Atheism is not as philosophically consistent with the phenomena of the physical world, taken by themselves, as the doctrine of a creative and sovereign power.' This is the expression of real and deep philosophic doubt, which is not in any way mitigated by the plea that he does not ' deny the validity of the argument from design in its place.' Neither did John Stuart Mill."[1]

To these charges Newman made a very sharp reply in the *Contemporary Review* for October, 1885, and supplemented it later by a privately printed paper on " Scepticism used as a Preparation for Catholic Belief."

[1] *Catholicism*, p. 125.

The magazine article professed to be a vindication of Newman's own views on the subjects under discussion, rather than a direct reply to Fairbairn. Indeed the Cardinal seems to suggest that it would be hardly worth his while to expose the errors of his antagonist. But, in spite of the exordium to this effect, the article is wholly occupied with rebutting Fairbairn's opinions, while a postscript to it carries the war into the enemy's camp and charges Fairbairn with garbling quotations, ignoring facts, and showing culpable ignorance of the writings he is attacking. The charge of philosophical scepticism Newman interprets as meaning that he is a "secret sceptic," and *in that form* he finds no difficulty in repudiating it. He gives further definition of the sense in which he uses the term reason, but goes on to speak of it in such a way, and with such profound distrust, as entirely to justify Fairbairn's contentions.

To this article Fairbairn published a carefully considered reply in December of the same year. The substance of it, so far as it concerns Newman, is contained in the following passage :

"Cardinal Newman may be described as, by virtue of his doctrine of the Reason, an empiricist in the province of religious truth. The reason is, as he is fond of saying, 'a mere instrument,' unfurnished by Nature, without religious contents or function, till faith or conscience has conveyed into it the ideas or assumptions which are the premisses of its processes, and with religious character only as these processes are conducted in obedience to the moral sense or other spiritual authority. It is to him no constitutive or architectonic faculty, with religious truth so in it that it is bound to seek and to conceive religious truth without it ; but it is, as regards religion, simply idle and vacant till it has received and accepted the deliverances of conscience, which stand to it much as Hume conceived his 'impressions' and their corresponding 'ideas' to stand related to mind and knowledge. But, then, to a reason so constituted and construed, how is

religious knowledge possible? How can religion, as such, have any existence or religious truth any reality? What works as a mere instrument never handles what it works in: the things remain outside it and have no place of standing within its being. And hence my contention was and is, that to conceive reason as Dr. Newman does is to deny to it the knowledge of God, and so to save faith by the help of a deeper unbelief."

In February of the following year (1886) Cardinal Newman issued a pamphlet,[1] for private circulation only, containing a number of 'Notes' on Fairbairn's second article. He deals first with the charge of scepticism, and accepts Fairbairn's explanation that what he meant was scepticism of a philosophical kind. "Though I do not understand the distinction, I am glad to receive from him a token of good feeling and courtesy such as I believe this to be." At the same time he altogether repudiates Fairbairn's definition of scepticism, sets up his own in contradiction to it, and once more easily shows that it does not in any way describe his conscious attitude. The rest of the pamphlet is occupied with notes on 'the meaning of the word Reason," "the faculty of Reason," "on the action of Reason as determined and regulated by other facul-

[1] Newman's first intention was to publish a second article in the *Contemporary*, but he hesitated, and expressed his hesitation in the following curious terms in a letter to Lord Blachford:—"At the last moment I soliloquise as follows: 'You are acting unworthily of your age and your station. You have made your protest in October: that is enough. If you write again you will be entering into controversy. You yourself know better than any man else that your submission to Rome was not made at all as a remedy against a personal, or against a controversial scepticism. It is only a matter of time for this to come out clear to all men. I feel this deeply. It would require a very brilliant knock-down answer to Dr. F—— to justify my giving up my place as an 'emeritus miles' and going down into the arena with a younger man. The only shade of reason for my publishing it, is that I wished to say in print that in past years I had spoken too strongly once or twice against the argument from final causes.'"

Lord Blachford's judgment was against publishing, and the pamphlet was therefore printed privately, in order to put its author right with Catholic thought. Cf. Wilfrid Ward's *Life of Cardinal Newman* (new impression), p. 509.

ties," "on the mind's faculties existing not 're' but 'ratione,' and therefore only abstract names for its operations," and on "final causes."

The whole argument is wiredrawn and pedantic to a degree, a mere discussion of terminology which has very little bearing on the main course of Fairbairn's argument. The following passage is typical :

"Here I am struck by what I must call the aridity of Dr. Fairbairn's polemic. What could be more natural, what more congruous, than that there should be a faculty which was concerned with the antecedent of the reasoning, as the reasoning itself is concerned with the consequent, so that the two faculties unite in a joint act, each of the two having need of the other ? But instead of accepting this division and arrangement of work, Dr. Fairbairn, I must insist, ungraciously refuses to see a harmony in such an association of two great faculties, and makes them enemies and rivals, as if I immediately exalted the moral sense and crushed the reason."

The fact is, the two men were working on different planes and using language each in a way that was hardly intelligible to the other. There is no sign in what Newman wrote that he really appreciated the point of Fairbairn's polemic, and, on his own side, Fairbairn was not interested in the aspect of the question that most appealed to Newman. Though their interchange of views created some stir at the time and has a certain historical interest, it remains an example of the futility of such controversy. It is pleasant to record, however, that it left no bitterness behind it. Newman's pamphlet is far more generous in tone than his article, and in the following tribute which he paid to Newman Fairbairn showed his true feeling for the man :

"It would, in some respects, be much more pleasant for me to allow the matter to stand where the Cardinal has left it, and were it simply a personal matter between him and me it would, so far as I am concerned, be allowed so

to stand. It costs a very peculiar kind of suffering to conduct a controversy, after his personal intervention, with the one man in all England on whose lips the words of the dying Polycarp sit with equal truth and grace. Not that Cardinal Newman has been either a hesitating or a soft-speaking controversialist. He has been a man of war from his youth, who has conquered many adversaries —amongst them the most inveterate and invincible of English prejudices. He was one who not only changed sides when the battle was hottest, but led a goodly company with him : yet the change, so far from lessening, increased the honour and admiration in which he was held. He has, as scarcely any other teacher of our age, made us feel the meaning of life, the evil of sin, the dignity of obedience, the beauty of holiness : and his power has been due to the degree in which men have been constrained to believe that his words, where sublimest, have been but the dim and imperfect mirrors of his own exalted spirit. He has taken us into the secret places of his soul and has held us by the potent spell of his passionate sincerity and matchless style, while he has unfolded his vision of the truth, or his quest after it. He has greatly and variously enriched the religious life of our people, and he lives in our imagination as the last at once of the Fathers and of the Saints. Whatever the degree of our theological and ecclesiastical difference, it does not lessen my reverence for the man, or my respect for his sincerity." [1]

It will have been noticed that the points raised by Newman have very little bearing on the main questions dealt with in Fairbairn's criticism of the Catholic position. He had argued that submission to Catholicism is the victory of unbelief. To accept truth on authority in sheer distrust of the intellect is a course of action neither reasonable nor religious. But he was chiefly concerned with this position so far as it affected the mental outlook and status of the Anglican clergy. It may be said that this was none of Fairbairn's business, and in a sense that is so. But he brought into England all a Scotchman's concern for religion and much of his spiritual combative-

[1] *Contemporary Review*, Vol. XLVIII, p. 842.

ness. He did not regard himself as a Dissenter from the Church of England, but only from the Establishment, and he was always careful to distinguish between them. The well-being of the Church was, he considered, the concern of every Christian man in the country, and when that seemed to be threatened he for one could not be silent. He honestly believed that the claims put forth in the Catholic revival were disastrous to the highest welfare of the English Church. Insistence upon apostolic succession changed the ministry "from being its means of service into being its pillar and ground of truth." [1] This change of function had deprived the clergy of those restrictions and safeguards with which clergy of the Roman Church are surrounded.

[1] Many years later he expanded this contention as follows in an article in the *Examiner*: "I can remember the shock that the assault on the ministry as a preaching ministry in the *Tracts for the Times* gave me. Their cry of a revived priesthood and sacrifice and sacerdotal ritual signified a revived Judaism. It was an attempt to escape from the church to the temple, from the Apostolical to the Levitical succession. For the order of the apostles was an order of preachers; and ever since the power of God has lived in His Spirit and in the Word. The force that created and has ever most moved the Church has been the preacher, not the priest. The supreme moment of worship is not, as the Roman Catholic fables, when the elements are consecrated or the host elevated; but it is when the man possessed of God speaks of the God who possesses him. For the mass represents the prostration of the intellect, but the sermon ought to signify its highest exercise. And the history of the Church shows that it is not the celebrant but the speaker, the man who can send forth winged words bearing the quickening truth of God, who has done most to conserve religion, enlarge and refine the Church, and uplift man. The stress then of the Christian ministry is not on what the minister does, but on what he is; on his prophetic, not on his sacerdotal character; it is as a prophet that he is a priest, his mediation is prophetic, exercised by means of the words he speaks, the thoughts he thinks, the emotions he awakens. And this means a most exalted notion of the ministry; the man who fills it has need to be an inspired man, living with God and unto God. He has need to retire from the very face of his congregation, from the streets where they may love to see him, and the houses where they wish to find him, into the immediate society of the Father; there to live alone, there to think alone, there to admit nothing to disturb the communion of his soul with heaven, or the meditation through which he aspires after the mastery of the truth by which he may set men free."

"The Anglican priest is free from the canonical laws which bind the Roman, and he can work his inexperienced will, and often does work it, not simply within the parish and congregation, but even within the more sacred sanctuary formed by the souls of its most pious members."

So the Catholic conception of the Church seemed to him no real development from the religion of the New Testament, but rather a corruption due to the fact that the Church has determined its idea of God and not been determined by the idea of God given in Jesus Christ.

This predominance of the Church in religious thought and life has narrowed down Christianity, making it a far more exclusive thing than it was meant to be, and overlaying the free religion of Jesus with a system that was all the more material that it was clothed in spiritual forms. Not in and through such a Church "is religion to be realised in an age of thought, in a world of freedom, progress, order, and activity. Its doctrine of authority and the Church is a direct provocation to scepticism: its idea of religion is an impoverishment of the ideal that came in the Kingdom of heaven. Faith can come by its rights only as it fulfils its duties to reason."

Far more effective than any reply of Newman's to this position was that of Dr. William Barry in an article in the *Contemporary*, entitled, "Catholicism and Reason." There is no doubt that here, as elsewhere in his writings, Fairbairn's antitheses were somewhat too sharply drawn, and it was quite easy for a clever controversialist like Dr. Barry to press them to a point where the *reductio ad absurdum* became quite evident. He defended Newman against the charge of scepticism more successfully than Newman could defend himself, and he pushed the war into Fairbairn's own camp by using his own terms against him. To substitute the authority of Christ for the authority of the Church was, he contended, to give up the whole case. The article was about as successful a defence of the Catholic position as could be made,

and was written with entire courtesy and goodwill, as may be judged from the following description of Fairbairn's criticisms with which it opens.

"That Dr. Fairbairn has shown himself learned, forcible, and eloquent, as well as a man of very kindly feeling towards those who differ from him: that he has illustrated his subject on every side, and combined history, criticism, and metaphysics after a rare and instructive manner; that in especial he has given proof of a most intimate acquaintance with Catholic literature during the last hundred years, I need not inform anyone who has but glanced at these essays. I should like to add for my own part how encouraging it is, in a time of sharp antagonisms and controversies about the very foundations of Christianity, to meet with an author whose conclusions, widely as I dissent from certain of them, are dictated by a profoundly religious spirit, and have for their purpose to persuade an unbelieving age that Jesus of Nazareth is still the beginning and end of wisdom because He is 'the only begotten Son of God.' Many things are implied in this confession, as it seems to me, which Dr. Fairbairn has overlooked or will not grant; but the *articulus stantis vel cadentis ecclesiæ* is ever that of Christ's divine personality, and I rejoice to think of Dr. Fairbairn and the many for whom he speaks, as on this point not separated from the Roman communion which, even whilst criticising it, he has described in glowing and generous terms."

While the controversy with Newman was proceeding Fairbairn met Cardinal Manning in London and had a long and interesting conversation with him on that and kindred topics. He wrote the following account of it to his mother.

"Bradford,

"*June* 1, 1885.

"I was in London the other week and had a busy time of it: what between attending meetings, seeing pictures, visiting friends and such-like I was almost done to death. One amusing experience happened: Cardinal Manning, the great Roman Catholic, wished to see me, and we met

at a friend's. He is an old man, sharp face, twitch in right eye, high head, sharp nose, and plausible manner. He had black gaiters on, and from behind them his scarlet stockings, sign of his rank as Cardinal, peeped. He did not convert me, and I did as little to convert him; but we had a great discussion. He was great in speech, I in questions, and the friends both on his side and mine were much impressed by the interview. It did all good. He had been powerfully moved by some papers of mine in the *Contemporary*. Of them and some others I am going to make a book which will in all likelihood appear next year."

We have already noted that the book *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, did not appear till 1899, fourteen years later. By that time Cardinal Manning had died, and the book contained a chapter entitled "Cardinal Manning and the Catholic Revival," [1] which had originally been written as a review of the notorious *Life* of the Cardinal by E. S. Purcell. With the inaccuracies and indiscretions of the author Fairbairn dealt very frankly. He was equally frank in his exposure of the somewhat tortuous and imperious career of the Cardinal. He concludes:

"The writing of this essay has not been a pleasant task. Deep as is the difference which divides the writer from Manning and his Church, it would have been infinitely more agreeable to write of him in another strain. But the study of the documents published in this book left him no option but to write as he has done, or not to write at all. He is grateful, therefore, to be able to strike at the end a note of cordial admiration. Manning was a vigorous administrator, a man of policies and methods, who was determined to have his own way; but he was not always as careful as he ought to have been about the means he used. His early inclination to politics was a real expression of nature: for his aptitudes were for the

[1] This appeared in the *Contemporary* in 1896, and attracted a good deal of attention. It carried the number of the review containing it into a second edition.

service of the State rather than the Church, and he loved and served the Church as if it were a State. He had the ambition that place satisfied and that could not be happy without place ; power he loved more than fame, and if he sometimes gained it by ignoble arts, he yet used it for more noble ends. He was a man success improved : and when the temptations which appealed to his lower instincts were removed, he showed in his age some of those finer qualities of nature and character which we miss in his strong and aggressive manhood."[1]

In a letter to his eldest son, dated March 12, 1896, Fairbairn writes of the article which had then just appeared :

" My article on Manning has been well praised and appreciated, only with the usual absurd differences due to ecclesiastical spites. Last Saturday I went to the Union just to have a look round. The *Guardian* praised its ' rare discernment,' thought it the best article which had been written on Manning, and gave two long quotations which were specially commended. The *Church Times* could not afford to praise the Head of Mansfield and so said it was ' pretentious, external,' etc. The *Rock* said it was too charitable to Manning, and characterised a remark as to the character of a man in any Church being the property of all the Churches, as a mere bit of sentiment, while a ' leader ' by another hand in the same paper said it was ' a most caustic criticism.' The *Spectator* didn't like to speak well of it seeing that it came from me, but recognised it as ' full of comprehension.' It was altogether an amusing study in the worthlessness of newspaper criticism and the force of the personal equation."

In 1890 Fairbairn returned to the subject of Anglo-Catholicism with another long article in the *Contemporary* apropos of the appearance of *Lux Mundi*. While among many of the more conservative both among Anglicans and Nonconformists this book was regarded as a rather dangerous portent, Fairbairn hailed it as representing

[1] *Catholicism*, p. 278.

a new and welcome departure in Anglican theology, and as being but the legitimate outcome of tendencies which had been long maturing. With the work of the men represented by it he had the utmost sympathy, though he did not always find it easy to understand them. He shared their desire to treat theology as a living science, and to restate it in terms of the present day, and their feeling as to the vast change which had been brought about by the evolutionary conception of history and of human thought. But he could not accept the theory of the Church, the priesthood, and the sacraments, in which the book culminated, and he stated his own position in uncompromising terms.

"The Church lives and moves and has its being in Christ; but the churches have as conditions of their being what used to be called the pure Word of God and the Sacraments. We are strictly within the lines of historical truth when we say that without the Word no Church can come into being, and without it none can continue. Every Apostolic Church was created by the preaching of the Word, and lived only as the creative became the preservative agency. As to the Sacraments we shall only say, once they became the acts and instruments of a priest they lost their original sense and were changed from the possessions and seals and symbols of the community into the appendices and articles of an office. The most inveterate schismatic is the person and the party that draws round himself or itself a circle and says, 'within this is the sphere of God's covenanted mercies: all without it is the region of the uncovenanted. We are the Catholic Church: all beyond is the province of the sectaries and the sects.' There is nothing in all history so intensely schismatic as this pseudo-Catholicism, it is the vanity of the sectary in its worst possible form. And those who believe that the Church of God is as broad and free as the mercy of God, may well be forgiven if they speak plainly and frankly about any attempt to bind it to a provincial polity, and to make it seem less large and less gracious than the action of God in history has proved it to be."

Discussions of this kind, however, represent but a very small part of Fairbairn's theological interest in these first crowded years at Oxford. He had no love of controversy for its own sake, and only engaged in it when it seemed necessary in order to defend his principles. He was far more concerned with the positive side of his work, with improving the standard of theological education, and leading the mind of the Free Churches to a wider outlook and a saner faith. This concern often took him very far afield, and opened to him practical activities and opportunities of service which left him too little time to devote to study. The result was that his theological work was never systematised, as he intended that it should be. All his books were but parts of a larger whole which he never was able to complete, and this should always be kept in mind in judging them.

The remarkable thing is that he accomplished as much as he did when we remember how his energies were continually dissipated. There is no doubt that part of the price which had to be paid for Mansfield College was the restrictions which the work connected with it placed on the purely scholarly activities of its Principal. Nor must it be imagined that he in any way confined his work for theology to the colleges with which he was connected. From the time that he settled in Bradford onwards, he was continually engaged in plans for furthering the cause of the higher education of the ministry. As early as 1879, when proposals were afoot for founding the Victoria University in the north of England, he raised the question of establishing a theological faculty and theological degrees in connection with it. He called a conference at Bradford of those representing the Nonconformist theological colleges to consider :

" (*a*) Whether it would be possible to have within the University a Theological Faculty of such a character as would allow us to present our students as candidates for a degree in theology. (*b*) Whether it would be possible

to secure for our colleges a corporate relation with the new university. (*c*) Whether we could obtain representation on the Council or governing body."

What Fairbairn had in mind may be gathered from the following letter which he wrote to Dr. Greenwood, the Principal of Owen's College, Manchester, in explanation of the circular calling the conference :

"In reading and interpreting the paper, please be so kind as to remember that it is really and simply a plea or an appeal for a Theological Faculty privately addressed to the Professors and a few friends of the Nonconformist colleges in the north of England. It aims at no more. It is a 'scheme' only so far as it seeks to make evident that a Theological Faculty may be a possible or even feasible thing. I do not know how it may be received. It may be so received that no more may ever be heard on the subject. But were the general idea well received, and the thing thought practicable, it is possible that you might be approached to see whether and how it could be carried out. I confess to the greatest possible interest in the matter, and my interest must be my apology for having gone so far. It seems to me that your movement has created an opportunity for establishing a school of theological learning in England, such as does not at this moment exist. It would, indeed, be one of the brightest triumphs of the modern spirit, if within our youngest university, where the physical and natural sciences promise to be so assiduously cultivated, theology could also be made a recognised study. To me too it seems a matter of the very first importance that the various schools of theology in the north of England should not only stand in vital relationship to the schools of Literature and Science but should also, as regards their own subject, be inspired by the pure and generous spirit of academic emulation and scientific ambition."

Nothing was done as the result of the conference, and there is no doubt that, even in Free Church circles, opinion was not yet ripe for any such bold step in advance. But Fairbairn was only anticipating what afterwards,

and, largely under his own guidance, actually came to pass. Even in the face of much discouragement he did not let the matter drop. His correspondence from this time forward is full of it. He believed that the difficulties which seemed so formidable were more apparent than real, and existed, as he said, largely "on paper." He thought that they would soon disappear if men would but meet and discuss them in a spirit of practical goodwill. One of the men whom he brought round to his point of view was Dr. Greenwood. He entirely agreed with Fairbairn in principle, but regarded his proposals as premature and impracticable. Meanwhile the new University was founded and certain tentative steps were taken in the direction of supplying theological teaching as part of the arts curriculum. The Principal of Owen's College gave a very successful course of lectures on the religion of the scholar. Later on a Greenwood lectureship in Hellenistic Greek was founded in his honour, as well as a Fraser lectureship in Church history in memory of the great bishop of that name. These things prepared the way for a Faculty of Theology, which was established in 1904. Fairbairn was consulted during the whole course of the negotiations which led up to it. He wrote long letters on the subject, criticising the first draft of the scheme, and entering into the minutest details of the curriculum. Nearly all the positive suggestions he made were ultimately adopted. One of his letters closes thus :

"It seems to me as if the school might give to the university an opportunity of elevating a number of much-neglected Institutions that have contributed a great deal to the education and well-being of the country as a whole, and are capable of contributing indefinitely more than they have yet done. I may add, and here I speak within the range of my own experience, that I do not believe that in a wisely framed and carefully worked scheme of theological studies more difficulties or more friction need or would arise than now arise in connection either with the physical sciences or with literature. It

is remarkable how little in the region of practical work theoretical objections prove real or relevant. Neither the university nor its examiners have to do with anything save knowledge, and here knowledge is so ample that they will find in testing it enough for both their power and their skill."

He still maintained the position which he had urged some twenty years before, viz. that the theological degree should be made to follow on a full arts course, and that the faculty should have no sectarian character, but contain upon it representatives of various theological schools. The system set up in Manchester fulfilled all his requirements. It is an autonomous and interdenominational Theological Faculty. Its teachers are appointed without tests and with sole reference to their scholarship and learning. Incorporated into it are a number of theological colleges of all denominations and their professors are recognised as university teachers in their respective subjects. Prof. Tout[1] writes of it :

"Though our experiment is still young, we believe that events have already justified our boldness, and that the faculty established on this dual basis will combine the advantages of the old system of separate theological colleges for each denomination with the advantages of a wider and freer academic school. While we wish our teaching in all subjects to be equally free we cannot, as practical men, blind our eyes to the fact that a large proportion of our students in the faculty of theology will be those who are preparing for the ministry of the various Christian denominations. We must respect their wants if we wish them to take part in the working out of our ideals." [2]

Fairbairn's work in connection with the Manchester Theological Faculty had, as we have seen, merely been

[1] *Manchester University Theological Lectures*, p. 20.

[2] It is interesting to note that one of those who took a leading part in setting up the Theological Faculty in Manchester, and who became the first Dean of that Faculty, was Prof. A. S. Peake, Fellow of Merton, Oxford, who had been a tutor at Mansfield, under Dr. Fairbairn.

that of an adviser. He had a much closer connection with the establishment and direction of the Theological Faculty of the University of Wales. In 1894 his old pupil Prof. Anwyl (the late Sir Edward Anwyl), of Aberystwyth, wrote to consult him as to the policy of a Committee of the Welsh university appointed to consider the question of a Theological Faculty and Degree. Early in the following year he was formally appointed a member of the Welsh Theological Board, and from that time forward spent a great deal of time and pains over its work. Here again he laboured without ceasing to raise the standard of theological study in the colleges of the Principality, and to make the University Faculty a thoroughly worthy one. He was for many years President of the Board and Examiner for the B.D. degree in Theism, Philosophy of Religion, and History of Doctrine. On retiring from this position in 1906 he received the degree of D.D. from the University of Wales *honoris causa*. On two occasions he, along with Prof. Reichel (now Sir Harry Reichel) and Prof. Gwatkin, of Cambridge, was appointed to carry out a visitation of those Welsh theological colleges that prepared men for the B.D. degree. It was largely under his influence that this degree was made a post-graduate one with a very high standard. All this was not accomplished without much labour and thought and not a little friction. There were those who seemed to resent the fact that any outsider should be called in to help the work of the Theological Board, and were impatient of any criticism offered of their work.

In reporting on his visitation of the theological colleges Fairbairn was very frank and even severe. He brought with him a high ideal, and did not always allow for the difficulties which the colleges had to face and for their chronic lack of funds. There is no doubt, however, that, deep as was the resentment caused by his strictures, he did a great deal to inaugurate a better condition of things and to stimulate both professors and students to

new activity. The setting up of the Welsh B.D. and the comparatively severe standard of the examination has given a new impulse to the study of theology in the Principality and has kept the work on a high level. This was Fairbairn's constant aim both as Examiner and as Chairman of the Theological Board. He found something very congenial in the fervour and keenness with which Welshmen took up this work, and their native aptitude for theology, as well as their sense of its importance as an academic discipline, was entirely after his own heart. Of the way in which he worked and of the judgment which was formed of him in Wales, Sir Edward Anwyl wrote :

"I had many conversations with him during the period that he was connected with the University of Wales, and I was greatly struck by the close personal attention which he paid to matters connected with theological work in Wales. Though he had so many other interests, he never dealt with anything connected with Wales in a perfunctory manner. This was widely known throughout the country, and he was there regarded with feelings not only of deep respect but of affection."

He was greatly chagrined that his criticisms of some of the colleges should have been taken in bad part, and he wrote vigorously to repel the charges of animus and unfairness which the friends of some of the colleges levelled against the report he had made upon them. He pleaded that what he said had not been fully understood, and that his only object had been to suggest improvement where he thought that some improvement was imperatively called for. But he never suffered these misunderstandings to damp his interest in the work or his zeal for theological education in Wales. He devoted to it a vast amount of time and pains which he could ill spare, and as Sir E. Anwyl suggests, he certainly had his reward.

Of his work for Wales, Principal T. Rees, of Bangor, one of his former students, writes as follows :

"The theological faculty of the Welsh University is no less Dr. Fairbairn's monument and the incarnation of his spirit than Mansfield itself. The charter of the University was granted in 1893. From 1894 to 1896 the Theological Board worked at the scheme for conferring degrees in Divinity, and Dr. Fairbairn was from the beginning its ruling spirit. It was Viriamu Jones and Dr. Thomas Charles Edwards, the Principals of Cardiff and Aberystwyth Colleges respectively, and two old pupils of T. H. Green, that induced him to take up the work. He insisted from the first upon setting up a curriculum and a standard of examination superior to those of any Divinity degree in the kingdom. But there was another task. The long denial of university education to Wales had acted adversely upon the theological colleges. They were inadequately staffed and poorly provided with buildings and libraries. But the Board, under Dr. Fairbairn's guidance, insisted upon a degree of efficiency in these matters that compared favourably with English colleges. The older men resisted and said that money could not be found to meet the requirements. The Doctor bade them try, and assured them that Wales would respond, and his prophecy has been fulfilled. The seven Nonconformist colleges of Wales have all come into line with the University's requirements, and are now Associated Colleges within the University. The Doctor gave immense time, labour, and thought to the perfecting of the scheme. But he worked with joy, for it gave him the opportunity to realise in a scheme his own high ideals of the training of ministers. Nor did he stop at formulating the scheme. He became its missionary to the Welsh people. Three times he visited all the Welsh theological colleges. He lectured frequently to students and ministers in the Principality. His first visit of the kind was in connection with the removal of the Independent College from Bala to Bangor. On those occasions he marshalled forth, with contagious enthusiasm, his vast encyclopædia of theology. A tale is told of one minister who threw up his charge after hearing one of those lectures. It is aprocryphal, but illustrative. But on the whole Wales responded heartily to his leading. Nowhere have his books been more widely read, and his theology, more

than any other, dominates our pulpit to-day. Our traditions and temperament provided a ready access for its Calvinistic background, its speculative range, and its poetic wealth. I once quoted a sentence of St. Paul's on natural religion in a Theism class, and asked whose it was. The English words were unfamiliar, but one student hazarded that 'they sounded like Fairbairn's.'"

Fairbairn's zeal for theological education was, as we have seen, never confined to merely academic work or academic circles. Soon after Mansfield was opened he found that there was a real demand on the part of the younger ministers of the Free Churches for theological instruction of a more popular kind which should enable them to keep abreast of the new thought of the time, and the better to adjust their preaching to its needs. He felt that the position of Mansfield College made it not only possible to do something to supply this need, but brought with it a duty to attempt it. After long and careful consideration he determined, in 1892, to hold a summer school of theology. The experiment was a new one in Oxford and was entirely successful. Fairbairn was able to gather a most attractive company of lecturers, including Drs. Sanday and Driver, of Oxford; Dr. Cave, of London; Drs. Bruce and Marcus Dods, from Scotland; and Drs. Francis Brown and Briggs, of New York. He also lectured himself on "The Place of the Person and Work of Christ in Modern Theology." The school was attended by 346 ministers of different denominations. The lectures were held in the Hall of Balliol College, and other colleges gave dining facilities and in other ways showed themselves hospitable to the school. Fairbairn himself was in his element. While he did everything possible to secure that the school should reach a very high intellectual standard, he was also anxious that the social side should not be neglected. Superior persons might sneer at the school as being a mere theological picnic; but he knew better, and was able to combine the two elements in it in such a way as that each

contributed to its success. Many a hardworking minister went away from that visit to Oxford with a new intellectual impulse and a wider horizon, as well as with a new sense of comradeship which helped to lessen his feeling of loneliness and isolation. Many a Free Churchman too conceived a new affection for Oxford, and realised that the time had come when the ancient and revered university was beginning again to count for something in the life and thought of his Church. The fact that distinguished Anglicans took so ready a part in the work and contributed so much to it did great good, and this was not in the least hindered by the criticism their conduct received from some of the more sectarian spirits in their own communion. This became, in some quarters, so marked that Dr. Sanday was moved to reply in defence of himself and his colleague, Dr. Driver, in the following letter to the *Guardian*, under the heading, "The Theological Faculty at Oxford and Nonconformists":

"OXFORD,
"*June* 4, 1892.

"SIR,

"When I accepted Dr. Fairbairn's invitation to lecture to the gathering of Nonconformists at Mansfield College in July, I knew that my action would be criticised, and I was quite prepared to take such criticism philosophically. But the leading article in your last number suggests some remarks which may perhaps be worth making.

"(1) I do not wish, or intend stress to be laid upon particular expressions, but I should be sorry for it to be supposed that a list of lecturers which includes Dr. A. B. Bruce, of Glasgow, Dr. Marcus Dods, of Edinburgh, Dr. Francis Brown, of New York, and Dr. Fairbairn himself could receive any noticeable accession of strength from me.

"(2) So far as it did so, I should be only repaying in kind a debt which I owe to Mansfield College. I am at present attending a course of lectures there by Prof. W. M. Ramsay, which is without doubt one of the most original

and important contributions to early Church History in recent years. And this is only a single incident in much valuable and ungrudging help which I have received from and through the college ever since its foundation.

" (3) The gathering in question offers, I cannot but think, quite an exceptional opportunity, and one which I consider it a privilege to be allowed to use. The applications received, I believe, exceed 300—for the most part from ministers in active work. This is indeed going to the fountain-head, and teaching those who are to teach others.

" (4) The beneficial effects of such teaching will not be confined to its immediate recipients. It is surely a real gain to all of us that the Nonconformist ministry should be as highly cultivated and trained as possible. I do not merely refer to the softening of asperities. The theological opinion of our day is being shaped by Nonconformists (including the Presbyterian churches) almost as much as by Churchmen. The *Guardian* itself constantly bears witness to the value of their work. So that to help to raise the level of theology among Nonconformists is really to help to raise it in the nation at large.

" (5) To me the question presented itself as a natural (I do not say a necessary) consequence of the throwing open of the universities. Nonconformists attend my lectures. As College Tutor I have Nonconformist pupils. But there does not seem to be any difference of principle between lectures given in term and out, or between lectures given to Churchmen and Nonconformists jointly or separately.

" (6) In the whole programme of lectures there is nothing, as between Church and Dissent, in the least degree controversial. I know that I need not alter a word in my own course to adapt it to its audience, and I feel sure that the other courses might be listened to with equal pleasure and instruction if the audience consisted of Churchmen. This would be only in accordance with the whole character and policy of Mansfield College which, so far as I have had any experience of it, has been uniformly positive and constructive, not negative and aggressive.

" (7) No doubt the extent to which a responsible person,

situated as I am, will feel free to join in movements such as this must depend largely upon his subjects and on the extent to which he can really take up common ground. My subject is the Bible, and I believe that students of the Bible all the world over are becoming more and more conscious that they must not wrest the text to foregone conclusions, but take the meaning as they find it. Thus a steady, silent approximation is taking place, and our ranks are closing, in spite of formal divisions, for the real battle against sin and unbelief.

"(8) The Mansfield movement is an experiment, and it seems likely to be a very successful one. But there is no reason why our own Church should not follow up the suggestion. I cordially agree with all you say on this subject, and I think that it is addressed to the right quarter.

"W. SANDAY."

Among many Free Churchmen, and elsewhere, the summer school was sharply condemned as being a mere vehicle for the dissemination of the Higher Criticism. It was held at a time when biblical criticism was beginning to produce effects outside scholastic circles, and was the cause of a good deal of nervousness and unrest. On this point, however, Fairbairn was quite unrepentant. Though his own chief interests lay in other directions, and though he never himself quite kept pace with the advance of criticism in his own time, he was fully alive to its importance, and was quite prepared to accept and use in theological teaching such results of it as were available. In an interview published shortly before the summer school was held he gave the following account of his own position in the matter:

"I believe we have passed through a period of great critical activity as regards the New Testament, with most decided gain to Positive Christianity and evangelical truth. Fifty years ago negative criticism was just beginning. Twenty-five years ago the tide began to turn. The hard and doctrinaire principles of the Tübingen school seemed at first to carry all before them, but a more

strictly historical school, both in Germany and in England, has arisen and superseded the Tübingen, and we may now expect most important and constructive results as regards the times immediately subsequent to the New Testament, especially as to everything that concerns the organisation of the churches and the formation of doctrine. But the clear gain is this, we know the New Testament as it was never known before. We can detach it from the determinations of later centuries, and read it more as it comes from the hands of its writers, and more as it seemed to the eyes of its earliest readers; and everything that brings the Church of to-day face to face with Christ and His Apostles, as they lived and as they taught, is pure and perfect gain. While the New Testament has passed so successfully through a great critical process, the gravest of all our critical questions to-day concern the Old Testament and the work and meaning of Israel—the history of the revelation of God in and through His people. But you may be assured that here too the issue will be gain. The times of sifting are always the times of clarifying. It is the gold that endures."

One of the ministers attending the school has given the following personal impression of Fairbairn's part in it:

"Taking him all in all, Dr. Fairbairn has impressed the ministerial students at the summer school of theology in Oxford as the greatest among the great men they have met there. What a combination he is! As a host, the most genial: as a speaker, the most resourceful and eloquent: as a personal presence, simply ubiquitous. Devout and interested at the morning religious service, he is seen at the close of the lecture following welcoming some new arrival: anon he is with the students at the reception by the Head of one of the university colleges, expresses their thanks most happily, and proves himself deeply versed in Oxford's history. At the next lecture he is there to introduce a new lecturer, and at the close may be seen on the lawn playing a game at bowls with Dr. Dods and others: while at night, as though he had devoted the whole day to preparation, he delivers a lecture that, for its union of philosophic thought, beautiful language, and eloquent delivery, is simply wonderful."

At the close of the school those who had attended gave expression to their sense of what it had done for them in the following letter, signed by twelve of their number representing different branches of the Church :

"*To the Rev. A. M. Fairbairn, D.D., Principal of Mansfield College.*

"SIR,

"In the name and on behalf of those attending the first summer school of theology at Mansfield College, we desire to offer our warmest thanks to you as Principal and, through you, to the authorities of the college who placed the buildings at the disposal of the school, and to the lecturers who have been associated with you—Prof. Briggs, Prof. Brown, Prof. Bruce, Principal Cave, Prof. Dods, Canon Driver, Principal Edwards, Mr. Massie, and Prof. Sanday. We thank you and them for the personal kindness we have experienced, for the instruction we have received, for the stimulus given to our studies, and to our ministry of preaching, and for much that has been said to the widening of our thoughts and the confirmation of our faith. We have greatly benefited by the new departure in theological teaching which this summer school of 1892 has made, and we pray God that you all in your several spheres of labour, and in your writings, may be long and abundantly blessed to the attainment of Divine truth, to the advancement of the Redeemer's Kingdom, to the training and instruction of those who with fulness of knowledge and faith shall minister to others of the unsearchable riches of Christ.

"We desire also through you to convey our hearty acknowledgments to those Heads of colleges and others who, by opening their halls to us and in other ways, have added to the pleasure and profit of our visit to this ancient and renowned city of learning.

"Further, as an expression of our gratitude and goodwill to this college, and as a memorial of this first summer school of theology, we beg you to use the accompanying sum of money in the purchase of volumes for the college library.

"We are, Sir,

"Your faithful and greatly obliged servants."

Fairbairn was greatly pleased with the success of the theological school. He repeated the experiment in the year 1894 on the same scale, and with equally good results. In this way he gave a real impulse to theological study. Summer schools became a kind of fashion, and are now held periodically, not only at Oxford, but in many other universities and by various religious bodies. There is very little doubt that Fairbairn himself obtained the idea from America, and that he imitated and improved upon what he had himself seen there. In the years 1884 and 1890 he had visited Point Chautauqua and had given a series of lectures at the famous school held there. Chautauqua stands for the beginnings of what is now everywhere familiar as University Extension. The work was originated in 1874 under the guidance of Bishop Vincent and Mr. Louis Miller of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was the parent of innumerable other institutions of the same kind in America. Fairbairn was greatly struck with the value of such work, and with the keenness of all who took part in it. "These Americans are nothing if not articulate," he said. Even the most popular of the lectures seemed to get home and to convey something both of instruction and enthusiasm. With the religious and theological side of this work he was deeply impressed, and recognised in it a welcome means of acquainting large masses of people with the advance in theological and biblical knowledge in a way that was impossible in the churches. At Chautauqua Fairbairn lectured on Christology, Comparative Religion, and the Philosophy of Religion. He was extremely well received, and he thoroughly enjoyed himself. This and similar lecturing experiences in America convinced him of the real utility of dealing with great subjects before popular audiences, and he never failed to give them of his best.

In 1893 Fairbairn published his book on *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*. In the next four years the book passed through twelve editions. It is the most

representative and, in some respects, the best of his published works. For a long time it had been preparing, and it embodied his mature thought on many of the subjects with which he had previously dealt in a more tentative fashion. The book starts from what he calls the new feeling for Christ, and is in no sense a system of theology. Its author did not so regard it. He described it as " an endeavour through a Christian doctrine of God at a sketch of the first lines of a Christian theology." As in all Fairbairn's work the constructive endeavour here is based on and embedded in a long critical and historical process. And he is always at pains to point out that criticism involves construction. He was more at home in the history than in the formulation of doctrine, though this book illustrates, better perhaps than any other that he wrote, how sincere was his desire for the renascence of systematic theology, and how valuable was the contribution he made to it. His sketch of the development of Christian theology is full of insight, and his handling of the great masses of material which the subject presents is brilliant in its ease and sureness of touch. The weight he gives to the various non-Christian factors which contributed to shape the thought of the Church, is very significant, and served to distinguish at once between his work and that of all earlier British dogmatic theologians. The dominant note of the book, as its title indicates, is the recognition of Jesus Christ as the original and determinative factor in Christianity. Fairbairn's theology is always theo-centric, God as Father, and man as child of God are the two foci of his thought. But we know God in Christ, and it is the Fatherhood of God as interpreted by the consciousness of Jesus which he here sets forth, or as he puts it, " This theology must, to use a current term, be as regards source Christo-centric ; but as regards object or matter theo-centric : in other words, while Christ determines the conception the conception determines the theology." From this point of view he

surveys the whole field of dogmatics, and indicates the lines along which the necessary reconstruction must proceed. Christ is the determinative idea both in theological and in ecclesiastical questions. He is ultimate while all else is derivative.

" But this historical Christ means much more for the Church than for literature. We cannot stand, as we now do, face to face with Him in a sense and to a degree unknown in the Church since the Apostolic age, and be as we were before. For this immediacy of knowledge compels the comparison of our societies, conventions, and systems with His mind and ideal. As He is the source and the authority of all the Churches, no Church can refuse to be judged and measured by Him. No development can be legitimate that is alien to His spirit and purpose."

But this must necessarily mean a new departure in theological expression and construction. Neither Nicæa nor Chalcedon succeeded in interpreting God adequately in terms of the consciousness of Christ, and the task must be attempted now because the material before the Church is fuller and richer than it has ever been.

" We all feel the distance placed by fifty years of the most radical and penetrating critical discussions between us and the older theology; and as the distance widens, the theology that then reigned grows less credible, because less relevant to living mind. Does this mean that the days of definite theological beliefs are over, or not rather that the attempt ought to be made to restate them in more living and relevant terms? One thing is clear: if a Christian theology means a theology of Christ, at once concerning Him and derived from Him, then to construct one ought, because of our greater knowledge of Him and His history, to be more possible to-day than at any previous moment. And if this is clear, then the most provisional attempt at performing the possible is more dutiful than the selfish and idle acquiescence that would simply leave the old theology and the new criticism standing side by side, unrelated and unreconciled." [1]

[1] *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 297.

On its historical and critical side the book is a fine example of Fairbairn's work at its best. It abounds in eloquent passages of characterisation, and shows his unique acquaintance with the thought of the past. At the same time it is marked by both originality and independence of judgment, such as gives to the student of theology not only help but stimulus. It met with a very cordial reception and was accepted at once as a really great and timely contribution to systematic theology, and one that would do something to revive the study of that long-neglected subject. Prof. Clemen, of Halle, reviewed it in the *Theologische Literaturzeitung* and recognised in it an original contribution to the effort after reconstructing theology on a Christological basis. He praised both its form and content, but complained of its neglect of the eschatological material in estimating the consciousness of Jesus Christ. This was a very shrewd criticism, and one that at that time of day would probably only have occurred to a German. The *Spectator* called it "one of the most valuable and comprehensive contributions to theology that has been made during this generation"; and marvelled at the freedom with which Fairbairn moved "in regions made perilous by the controversies of many centuries." At the same time it was doubtful as to the reception the book would meet with among Fairbairn's own friends:

"It is impossible to help wondering now and again, as we read, what his fellow Congregationalists feel. They will thoroughly agree with him, for instance, when he writes that Christianity 'stood among the ancient faiths as a strange and extraordinary thing—a priestless religion'; but what will they say to his reason—'It so stood, because its God did not need to be propitiated, but was propitious'? And yet less than fifty years ago Dr. Ross was condemned, with the almost unanimous approval of the Nonconforming bodies, for maintaining this very doctrine, that God was the Reconciler, not the one that needed to be reconciled. And, more recently,

Mr. T. T. Lynch was, if not actually expelled, put under the ban by his orthodox brethren for much the same teaching."

But the *Spectator* is never very well informed about Nonconformity, and it need not have been alarmed. The instances referred to were very ancient history by this time, and among Congregationalists at least there was no disposition to regard Fairbairn as anything but a very safe and welcome leader.

Dr. Forsyth wrote of the book in the *Evangelical Magazine* for May, 1893 :

" The work will change and colour our theology for many a day. We hope it may restore public interest through history to dogmatics. It is an extraordinary combination of readability and profundity, of sparkle and depth, of epigrams which open vistas, and thoughts 'which broke through language and escaped.' But we all know that skilful lucidity, that genial sympathy, that sanguine note, that keen dialectic, that informed eloquence, that sustained march of the whole army of thoughts carrying without disorder its small brisk counter-marches of antithesis, and its excursions into the locality it may pass. Without Newman's ethereal haze, it has more than Newman's brilliancy, more than his critical acumen, much more than his philosophic power, and a light worn wealth of knowledge, both philosophic and historic, which makes the father of modern Anglicanism by comparison a jungle of ignorance crossed by streaks of insight and pricked with spots of light."

Such doubt as to the orthodoxy of the book as found expression came from some Wesleyan writers, the Low Church papers, and the more conservative among Scotch Presbyterians. One writer in the *Presbyterian Monthly* was allowed to say :

" The deadly errors which appear in this book in the glamour of fresh learning, literary art, and showy generalisations will, if not suppressed, rend churches, expel their best ministers, bring spiritual death for generations."

It was, no doubt, in order to avert these calamities, that one Presbytery at least tried to put the book on its index, by passing a resolution forbidding its use as a text-book in the U.P. College. But these were extreme instances. The general mind of the Presbyterian Churches was better expressed by Dr. A. B. Bruce in the *Contemporary Review*,[1] who wrote as follows :

" When a man of Principal Fairbairn's standing, ability, learning, earnestness, and undoubted loyalty to the faith makes an appeal to his fellow Christians to the effect that theology requires revision and reconstruction on the basis of Christ's idea of God, it cannot reasonably or safely be put aside. Its claim to attention is strengthened by the perfect courtesy and good temper with which the writer's views are stated, even when as in the case of the Church question his attitude is most uncompromising. Dr. Fairbairn's theological position is by no means revolutionary. He discards no recognised theological categories and he adds no new ones. He aims only at revision and correction, and above all at the breathing of Christ's spirit into theology. The fault of the book in the eyes of many will be that it alters so little. It will much help all who accept the Catholic faith, but it will disappoint those who wish for ever to be rid of the miraculous and the transcendental in religion, and to have a creed based on thorough-going naturalism. Such will have to take up with the ' new Christianity ' offered them in the name of philosophy, or find for themselves a new religion not bearing Christ's name, or get on as well as they can without religion. Whether the party of malcontents is to increase amongst us may depend on the reception given to *Christ in Modern Theology*."

The book brought to Fairbairn an immense number of letters of appreciation from theological professors and students, from ministers of all denominations, and even from working men. They were all couched in the same strain of thankfulness for help received in genuine per-

[1] *Contemporary Review*, May, 1893, p. 88.

plexity as to fundamental Christian truth. Mr. Gladstone wrote as follows :

"HAWARDEN CASTLE,
"*October* 15, 1893.

"Your comprehensive and very interesting volume reached me yesterday. Pray let me offer my best thanks. My power of reading is now much impaired from a variety of causes ; but I have formed some idea of the character of your book by an initial perusal in several places. The fine passage on the work of our Lord in the world pleased me very particularly, and I found the picture of Evangelical and Anglican very perspicacious, just, and liberal.

"Childhood and boyhood placed me in very close connection with the evangelicalism of those days, and very notable it was. In one collateral point I think you give it more than it deserves. It had large religious philanthropy, e.g. in missions ; but little political philanthropy. The great case of Wilberforce was almost purely an individual case : nor was he more against slavery than Dr. Johnson. Speaking generally—I am sorry to say—the Evangelicals of that day were not abolitionists. They left that honour to the Nonconformists, most of all to the Quakers. Their Toryism obstructed them, as it does now. Buxton, I admit, did a great work, but was, I think, hardly a Churchman. Wilberforce, on the other hand, was a warmly attached one, and of a beautiful and heavenly character."

In the same year that this book appeared, Fairbairn also published a volume of sermons entitled *Christ in the Centuries*. It was one of a series called *Preachers of the Age*, and consisted of a number of discourses, some of which were delivered on special occasions, or as Fairbairn himself called them, Occasional Sermons, Congregational Sermons, and Pulpit Discussions. The first-named dealt with Christian truth in its broader aspects, the second with particular duties and experiences of the Christian life, and the third with certain familiar Christian ideals and problems. Several of these sermons are strictly apologetic in aim and deal with vexed problems in a

thorough, tender, and modern fashion. Others of them are as strictly pastoral in their tone and scope, and are marked by depth of thought, fineness of feeling, and at times by real eloquence of expression. Very little idea of Fairbairn's power as a preacher can be gathered from the printed word, but there is enough here to show his gift of exposition, and the human sympathy that was always characteristic of his preaching. From such sermons as these it is possible to understand the reasons which one of his students gave for his popularity with working people.

"They like to hear Dr. Fairbairn because he is so sure, so earnest, and so enthusiastic, and if they are unable to follow all the reasoning they go away none the less happy, encouraged by the thought that so earnest a man is a true believer. When a great man makes his boast in the Lord, the humble hear thereof and are glad."

It may be convenient here to gather together some of the impressions of Fairbairn's theological teaching by some of his old students most competent to judge of it.[1]

Principal R. S. Franks, of Bristol, writes:

"The first point that occurs to me as noteworthy in connection with Dr. Fairbairn's instruction is its encyclopædic character. He began his theological course after the German manner, with a term's lectures on theological encyclopædia; and these lectures were, at the very outset of his teaching, an indication of the broad and generous outlines on which the whole was conceived. Every one who took those lectures will remember what large horizons he swept, what an idea of the greatness of the task before us he managed to convey. He made us understand that it was a large and many-sided subject upon which we were entering; and that a wide and at the same time thorough culture was necessary, before we could become reasonably proficient in it.

"The same lesson in a more concrete form was conveyed by what was probably the most outstanding feature

[1] These have already appeared in a memorial number of the Mansfield College Magazine, printed for private circulation only.

of Dr. Fairbairn's teaching. I mean his consistent and thorough use of the historical method. There is no need to dwell on this point at great length; but there is no doubt that the influence on his pupils of this steady use of the historical method cannot be over-estimated. Those who listened to Dr. Fairbairn were thereby made to realise, as was possible in no other way, the greatness of the problems of theology, and the amount of patient work necessary to understand them. We were made to feel too that only through a consistent tracing of the history of each problem could we understand the form it had assumed in our own time. We were brought fully to realise the relativity of the different traditional forms of doctrine. A silent and subtle criticism and revolution of many things we had thought absolutely fixed took place as we listened; and a certain plasticity of mind and elasticity of thought was the result. Yet all the while the spirit in which this critical schooling was given, was never merely negative. There was an atmosphere of faith and hope in the class-room, emanating from the personality of the lecturer. We were encouraged to believe in the possibility of the solution of the various theological problems, however arduous and difficult the way to that solution might be. There was method in Dr. Fairbairn's every word, look, and gesture; an unshaken confidence in the reasonableness of the Christian religion, which probably did more to help us in any difficulties we might have, than even any actual positive teaching which was given.

"There was, however, positive and constructive teaching, especially in the domain of apologetics. Looking back upon the instruction I received from Dr. Fairbairn, I think that the positive principles which he most impressed on my mind were the argument from the intelligibility of the universe to an intellect behind it, and the argument by which he turned the flank of the difficulty presented by evolution, viz. that, by whatever processes things might have come to be what they are, if mind were seen in the result, mind must have existed in the beginning. I have never lost the impression made by these arguments. I should now, indeed, be inclined to take them with considerable limitation, and not in the abso-

lute form in which Dr. Fairbairn stated them. He never seemed fully to contemplate the fact that, after all, the intelligibility of the universe is only partially empirically proved, that there are many things in it which are at present not intelligible to us; and that therefore the intelligibility of the universe is rather a faith, or a hypothesis in process of verification, than a fact. The same is true in regard to the theological argument. Again, Dr. Fairbairn did not contemplate what are to us at present the irrational elements in the universe, the surds in our formulæ, as some one has called them. Mind, no doubt, must have been in the beginning, so far as mind has emerged. But as a matter of fact we by no means see 'all things subject' to the Divine Logos; apparently irrational and recalcitrant elements meet us everywhere. Our belief in the rational aim of the universe remains then again a faith or a hypothesis only so far verified. In both these cases, then, if we appeal to reason it is to a reason conditionally coloured rather than to the pure intellect only. It is then with these modifications that I should now accept the doctrines I learned from Dr. Fairbairn. Nevertheless the impression made by his teaching has been a lasting one: I have never doubted the truth of his doctrine, but have only been compelled to modify the grounds on which I hold it.

"In the sphere of dogmatics Dr. Fairbairn gave us little construction in his lectures; we could sometimes have wished for more. Of course there was, in my time at any rate, his great book, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, to which we could turn for an exposition of his positive theology; and we were not therefore left in doubt as to his positive views. Nevertheless it was tantalising sometimes to be led to the ends of the theological development in the Protestant orthodoxy, and not to be taken further. I think we should have appreciated and been helped by an account of modern theories, especially those of Schleiermacher and Ritschl. Perhaps the intent to prepare for the Oxford Schools had, at any rate as far as the doctrines of the Godhead and Incarnation were concerned, some effect on the limitation of instruction to the history of the earlier stages of theological development. It is also to be remembered with gratitude that,

if Dr. Fairbairn did not discuss Schleiermacher, except only as to his theory of religion, and did not discuss Ritschl at all, he did a great service to those in college at the time of his visit to India, by getting Dr. Garvie (as he now is) to give us a course of lectures on Ritschl, which was afterwards made the basis of his book on the Ritschlian Theology."

Dr. Garvie writes :

" Dr. Fairbairn was a pioneer among Christian theologians in the importance he attached to the comparative study of religions ; but even here his emphasis fell more on the intellectual factors or the ideas, than is common to-day. He was more at home in the philosophy of religion than he would have been in the psychology. His own religious Christian personality did give warmth, as his large and keen intellect gave light in his lectures ; and yet as I look back to-day from my present standpoint to his instruction, I cannot but recognise that it based religion on the reason more exclusively and confidently than most thinkers to-day can ; but there remains with me to-day the inspiration of his triumphant confidence that the thought of man witnesses clearly and surely the truth of God. That the history of man, and especially of his religion, is full of meaning and worth, because full of what philosophy calls reason, and faith calls God, is a lesson he taught never to be forgotten. To be thorough in learning and thinking is what his own example enforced. But, best of all, he was a gracious companion as well as a learned and wise teacher ; and so he is remembered not with admiration and gratitude only, but with the heart's warmest affection."

The Rev. T. M. Watt writes :

" As a personal force, I think, he kept his hold on the men of the college to the end. He was ever anew surprising us into fresh admiration, from some word that he spoke in private, on the golf links, or in sermon-class. One incident which I cannot help recalling will ever live fresh in the memories of those who were present. It happened, if my memory as to time does not fail me, in the Hilary Term of 1903. During that time we had

wrestled with all the great Pauline and Johannine ideas as to the Atonement and the Incarnation, in one of the last Seminars he held in college. Our quizzical brains, gradually acquiring some familiarity and skill in the conceptual game, were toying with the great terms of theology, as the gamester with his counters. He bore with us long and patiently, setting forth, with all his wonted eloquence, the great philosophic framework of the doctrine of the Trinity, and in particular the special shape it had assumed in his thought. On our part there was, I am convinced, an easy assurance, that a mere logical *impasse* of our devising brought to a standstill the progress of his thought, and we challenged his advance. It was never his way to shirk difficulties, where the problems were those of the intellect, by seeking to ignore them through the emotional crisis of prayer. But it was just to this that he brought us, on the last of our meetings, in a moment that thrilled the most light-hearted of us. It was there, as an element in his teaching, a source of strength held in reserve; not to ignore difficulties, but to reinstate in our lives the experiences of the Christian soul, from which the whole system of Christian doctrine had its source. The easy brilliance of our negative criticism seemed a paltry glittering illusion in face of the experiences we had lost sight of, and which still awaited interpretation. They tell us, these days, that he was not a mystic, and that he did not do justice to Ritschlianism. Mystic he was not, in the sense that is fashionable to-day: for, in the light of the mystic's plea, he would have demanded some criterion whereby to judge and to weigh the value of the 'immediate' experiences on which the mystic relies. This he urged in the spirit of Hegelianism, which had done so much for his thinking. But he was never wholly mastered by the Hegelian system, as were other thinkers of his day. He broke away from it in his treatment of history; and his Theology would never completely submit itself to the cast-iron mould of the Hegelian categories. Hegelian thought was useful as an ally, but dangerous as a master. On the other hand he saw that Christian Theology, in alliance with speculative idealism, would be brought into line with the great constructive periods of Christian thought, when philosophy

and theology were in harmony with each other. Hence, Ritschlianism never attracted him, because of its uncertain if not agnostic attitude towards the problem of speculative philosophy, and its attempt to seek security from historical criticism in the experience of the 'Living Christ' or the 'Inner Life of Jesus.' Ritschlianism bore too much the marks of being an apologetic, and not a constructive system.

"The great mark of the Doctor's thought was that he kept in view all these interests—the claims of history, the facts of Christian experience, and the further problems which are raised by 'experience' and reality, as viewed by the philosopher. That the Christian consciousness and its experience was the starting-point of his thinking is suggested by the incident I have mentioned, and is borne out by his writings. The starting-point for Dr. Fairbairn was undoubtedly Christian experience, but Christian experience as seen alongside other realms of experience which do not contradict, but supplement, and give it its true setting. If he was not a mystic, yet he had a living sense of the Presence of God in the soul. What he tells, in a *Contemporary* article, of the crisis in his early life, in Bathgate, points to the fact that the sense of that Presence did not desert him: it was an intellectual, rather than a spiritual crisis, and its character determined the emphasis of his teaching in his later years."

The following letters refer to matters dealt with in this chapter:

*To his Wife.*

"OXFORD,

"*December* 22, 1889.

"I have so much to tell I had better begin at the beginning. On Tuesday I drove from Marshall's to Ed. Spicer's; had there the cordial welcome one always gets. She drove me out in the afternoon to see *Truth's* Doll-show; it was really wonderful, pyramids of dolls, big and little; toys of all sorts gathered from all quarters for distribution among hospitals, workhouses, etc., of London; the amount of happiness they would give to

wasted little hearts immense. In the evening went to Wemyss Reid's dinner; thirty present; company included Lord Acton, Oscar Wilde, Bryce, Augustine Birrell, William Black, and quite a host of others. Acton was very friendly; remembered meeting John; spoke with enthusiasm of Magdalen and Oxford, and was altogether interesting. Birrell was also good; he was my immediate neighbour, Acton next. Birrell was full of talk, great on eighteenth-century men; a man of letters, not ashamed of his Nonconformist descent—at least to me—yet thinking and speaking of Nonconformists as something outside him, with which he was largely over and done. Wish it were possible to get over this attitude. Lyon Playfair was also there, an amusing man, full of anecdote, with whom I had large speech about home. Oscar Wilde sat opposite me, very handsome fellow, tall, broad, hair parted in the middle, flower in button-hole, with the air about him that he ought to be looked at, and would improve everybody who would be wise enough to do so. Clifford Allbutt, of Leeds, who has retired from his practice, was also there, and I for one was very glad to meet him again. So was Frederic Harrison, but with him I had no talk. The evening passed quickly away, and it was, I am sorry to say, 12 o'clock before I got back to Spicer's.

"Next day I came down by the first train; found all well, and all behaving themselves exceedingly. Indeed, the house is going on well: Anna manages like one to the manner born; silver is looking like silver, carpets clean, meals regular, and no cause of complaint anywhere or about anything. You can keep yourself at rest—take your holiday now you have a good chance—and once you are free by the arrival of the housekeeper use your freedom. We are dull, of course, but we are well behaved, and should be all the happier that you took such rest as you could, and came home relieved in mind and recruited in body. . . .

"Since returning from London I have been hard at work, especially on *Lux Mundi*. I am to have review ready for the first number of the *Speaker*, and wish to have extended criticism for the February *Contemporary*. Hence I have been going vigorously at the book; but it is

really marvellous how broken time is. It was so tiring in London that it is only now that I begin to feel working with a clear and easy mind.

"I enclose one or two letters that will interest you. One cannot but admire the bravery of Mrs. Macfadyen; she is indeed a noble little woman.

"Possibly we shall have no one on Christmas Day: Jack is going to see whether a young college friend is up; if he is, he'll be here; if not, the day will be well saved.

"Hibbert Trustees were rather aghast at the state of Hatch's notes; have returned them. Sanday and others met here yesterday, and we have agreed to propose to the Trustees that we edit the said notes, and issue the same in the best form we can—which is not so bad as had been feared.

"Legacy of £50 has come in to the College; wish it had been £500. We need it all; the £600 for roads has come on all as a surprise, and we are now face to face with a deficit, even counting in the Birmingham £1000.

"I have written to Green, proposing that he suggest to Mrs. Rylands founding a Chair to be tenable by either Baptist or Congregationalist. He takes kindly to the scheme. . . ."

*To his Wife.*

"Oxford,

"*December* 26, 1889.

"Your letter was most welcome: it helped us to get somewhat clearer an idea of how you were faring: news of your improvement very welcome: hope all arrangements may prove happy, and the patient without care soon be a patient restored.

"Here little goes on except work. I finished on Tuesday night or Wednesday morning my review of *Lux Mundi* for the *Speaker*, and sent it off yesterday. Hope to begin now *Contemporary* article: begun indeed; arrange and revise material to-day; but process is slow; so many points come up for discussion. Am not sure it is a wise thing for relations here to notice book; but so direct a challenge, that not to notice it were even

less wise. If Hatch had lived, his might have sufficed ; now, unless I do it, there is none who can or will.

" Hatch's portrait came yesterday as acutest mingling of pleasure and pain : it was so good of you, so mindful : will be to me so constant a joy to possess such a portrait : yet it for the moment so brought back the dead, with all its loss to the living, that tears rose with the gratitude and joy. It is hung on the end of the projecting book-case, where it looks well and striking.

" I called to see her on Sunday. Poor thing, she is full of herself ; but begins to feel as if she might yet have comfort. She is going to bring out a biography of him ; one fears the result, but can only hope for the best. It will be hard to refrain from saying things that will embitter."

*To Sir Alfred Dale.*

"*April* 29, 1902.

" Mr. Hope Simpson has written to me touching your discussions and proposals as to the power of incorporating theological colleges in your University scheme. I am very full of the matter in connection with the organisation of the Theological Faculty in Wales. I do not know whether you have seen a copy of our report which I drew up and presented to the Theological Board, and which bears the signatures of Reichel, Gwatkin, and myself. I forward a copy to you. It has ceased to be ' private and confidential ' and is now public, as the University Court has adopted and passed a resolution that will mean its incorporation in the statutes.

" I think one has to be very careful as to giving the theological colleges power over the regulation of degrees. You must not let them level down the University, but rather use your position to level them up. We may have a talk over this matter when we next meet. I have discussed the subject with Lodge at Birmingham and with Hopkinson at Manchester. I think the possibility of making the theological degree a ghastly failure is near enough to be feared ; the possibility of making it a great engine for improvement is remote enough to be striven after with all one's heart and mind."

*To the Same.*

"*October* 8, 1904.

"If it had not been for the Church Congress and the way in which you would be occupied by it and your other duties, I should probably have come to see you in the early days of this week and have a brief talk with you. As that was impossible, I had to come home after paying a visit to Yorkshire to be present at the inauguration of the Leeds University. It was, on the whole, an impressive ceremonial. The idea was well conceived, though I hope few Universities, especially of the newer order, will sow their degrees broadcast. A tightening up of standards is what is mainly needed, and I do think we must make up our minds to develop in the local Universities local aptitudes and satisfy local needs, and leave to the older homes of learning the cultivation of the humaner and more cosmopolitan studies. This may seem to you rank heresy, but I have been thinking it over somewhat of late and should like, among other things, to talk with you on this head."

*To Professor Peake.*

"OXFORD,

"*June* 3, 1891.

"I have read your letter with deep sympathy, and certainly appreciate your motives and all you would surrender. For many reasons I wish it were in my power to set before you a permanent career here worthy of your deserts. It would be a great personal pleasure to me to be able to help you in connexion with Mansfield and the prospects of Theology in Oxford. But my own feeling must be made strictly subordinate to your sense of duty. And I feel what a great opportunity may come, nay, has come to you in your own Connexion. It seems to me as if you had been specially raised up and trained for the very work that is most in need of being done for it. And you are in many ways the only person that can do the work. You may lift up their idea of the ministry, of the Church, may open their minds while in no way cooling their piety, and may attain a position and influence

any bishop might envy. It says much for your people that they have proved themselves able to appreciate this opportunity, and the promise such appreciation gives is one of the happiest elements in the situation. I hardly at this moment see how we can do without you ; yet I no less feel the possibilities of a career which such an appointment would open. Possibly your Connexion might come to see that your work could be done here ; that for a few men you could do better in Oxford than in Manchester ; but quite as possibly you would need to do some service in the old institute before any new enterprise could be proposed with any chance of success. What is before my mind is this : were they to appoint and maintain you here as resident tutor, sending only the picked men who could graduate, or had graduated, then these men could be taken in as T—— has been to be educated in Mansfield, while you would be at once their tutor and a member of our staff. I am sure our people would do all in their power to make some such arrangement possible."

*To the Same.*

" *May* 16, 1904.

" I wanted to consult with you touching various things, especially the mission on which I was in Manchester. It struck me that our people did not at all understand the questions at issue and that it might have been well if we had met for a brief talk some day—say in the Rylands' Library. I sent a protest to Hopkinson the day after the Committee, as I cannot in conscience accept the conclusions reached or the forms in which they were stated and argued. My feeling is that the scheme, as it has been drafted and put into force, will involve the ruin of all the higher teaching in our colleges, transferring the centre of gravity as regards theological teaching from them to Owen's College. It was that for which I was fighting and which lay at the back of my mind, and made me fear that while the Churchmen clearly saw what were the principles in debate, our friends did not. But you know how crowded one's life is and how difficult it is to fit in a journey, especially at the time of the year when you will be absent who would be one's main stand-by.

I do feel that our colleges, Lancashire, yours, Didsbury, the Baptists', and so forth, have the whole question in the hollow of their hands, and that if you like you can settle it in a way to enhance your own worth; but if it be allowed that Owen's College or the University provide the major part of the teaching, then the days of your pre-eminence will be numbered. Please think over the matter and let me know your mind; and if your own idea is that any good can come of my attempting to visit Manchester towards the end of June I shall try to do so."

*To the Same.*

"*May* 27, 1904.

"I am very sorry to hear of your illness and hope you will speedily be quite vigorous. You do far too much. How you accomplish it is a standing wonder to more than myself. You have great opportunities and great influence, and I am sure they did very wisely in appointing you Dean. In the circumstances of course I won't go to Manchester or even propose it. What concerned me altogether was the chance that the institution of a degree in theology offered to the colleges. It is a great means of bringing them into immediate relation with the University, and I am sure the Churches would rise at once to the position of equipping them, so as to bring them to the dignity of academic institutions. I am glad to find you so hopeful, and with you as Dean I cannot but feel that all will yet be well. I hope you will take a good outing and be thoroughly well set up for the year's work.

"You will enjoy delivering the Hartley lecture in Birmingham. Carr's Lane is, in its way, a perfect place for speaking. I hope to be there later on and, all being well, shall hope to see you some time when we can have a full talk over many things."

*To Rev. A. E. Garvie.*

"*May* 4, 1893.

"I am very pleased indeed that two such invitations have come to you simultaneously. I feel that in this way the promise which I have never failed to see in you and your prospects has been amply vindicated.

"Now as to the choice between. I feel you have summed up and stated the matter so judiciously and impartially that nothing hardly remains for me to say. I think, as far as the pulpit is concerned, Macduff is the more desirable place. It would tax you more, place you on your mettle, and give you what is always an important thing, an appreciative congregation. You would not feel as if you had to raise, but only as if you had to rise to their level. This is a matter you must weigh carefully, for I think it will have great influence on your own future. On the other hand, you would have time for study and for thought. Command of books is an immense advantage which has also its difficulties, especially as regards the way in which it may suppress independent thought, though in your case there would be little danger of this sort; on the contrary, your work would be purely pastoral and congregational, and in that respect certain faculties would remain more or less unexercised.

"Now as to Summertown. I think you must face the matter, as it concerns the promise of the church as well as its present condition. The greater part of the money for the building will, I fear, have to be raised among those who know its circumstances. Mr. Smith will be better able to tell you than I of what prospect there is of early building; but I feel I would not be honest were I to say that you could count on much help from without: so much depends on the friends here that I could not of course undertake to speak concerning it, but I have no doubt that with the church all alive and with your own activity and zeal the difficulties would be overcome.

"Of course what I have to say as to the College does not commit the Council. I speak only what I should like myself to see, not what I have power absolutely to carry out; and here I am free to say that nothing would give me greater pleasure than to see you doing the kind of work you yourself have sketched. All I can do to further it, you may depend on being done, and your programme is the very thing I should like to see carried out both in the church and in the College and in the relation between them."

*To the same.*

" *December*, 1894.

" Do not be despondent in your ministry, or expect great things to happen in a single year. Through seventeen long years I knew what it was to suffer the sickness of hope deferred, and the number of times I got such things said to me as the local editor said to you were enough, if any man believed them, to make him discontented with the humdrum and apparently resultless toil of a laborious rural pastorate. Dear Mr. Garvie, do not look at things in too impatient or even too expectant a way. Part of the discipline that fits us for future life is bearing a yoke that we would rather not be forced to carry. Then do not think too much of the impatience or the little superficial grumblings of a neglected one here and there: these things come to us all: but behind lies the sense that in serving the little ones we are serving the Master, and the little ones do not always know that they are served."

The following recollections of Fairbairn and his work in Oxford have been contributed by Dr. Sanday:

I got to know Fairbairn, through Hatch, soon after his coming to Oxford, which nearly coincided with my own return thither as Ireland Professor (in 1883). One of the first independent opinions which I had formed in my own undergraduate days had been in favour of the throwing open of the Universities to Nonconformists, and that on many grounds both of policy and of principle; so that, when the movement took effect in the founding of Mansfield College, I was greatly interested in its success and gladly co-operated in such ways as I could. I well remember the stimulus which the new institution brought with it, and the open-minded and liberal-handed manner in which its Council and Principal signalised its arrival by more than one special course of lectures—the first beginning, I think, of the " summer schools " which gradually came to be a permanent feature in the life of the Univer-

sity. This was one of the first hints which Anglicanism took from Nonconformity, and which from theology passed over to University extension in general.

We were aware at once that a strong man had come to settle among us, and that a fresh and vigorous stream of energy was quickening the currents of the old learning. It need not be said, to those who know it so well, what an advantage Mansfield College with all that it stood for possessed in the person of its Head. I fear that I shall only be repeating what will have been said far more competently in other parts of this volume ; but as I am asked for my recollections and impressions I ought perhaps to give them as they are. Not only was there the commanding position which the Head of Mansfield held in English Nonconformity, but it was also of great importance that he had behind him the resources of Scotland. Dr. Marcus Dods, Dr. James Orr, Dr. S. E. F. Salmond were practically new names to us in Oxford. The greatest name of all, Dr. A. B. Davidson, was not quite so new, because that distinguished and epoch-marking Hebraist and Old Testament scholar was, I believe, already known to our own leaders in the same subjects, Dr. Cheyne and Dr. Driver. But it was much for us to have the opportunity of meeting such men in the flesh ; and it certainly widened our horizon. From its first days until the present Mansfield College has always discharged this valuable function. If it is possible to speak of British theology as a whole, if there is something of a common spirit and of common aims running through it, no single institution has done so much for this as Mansfield. Of course any good thing that begins at Oxford is sure to be effectively taken up at Cambridge and vice versa. But Mansfield set the example. And it has to be remembered that Mansfield by a piece of special good fortune came to us from without, and was only in a subordinate sense developed from within.

If it was nevertheless true that it was in a genuine

sense so developed, that was due especially to two men —Benjamin Jowett and Edwin Hatch. The wish to welcome Nonconformists among us was, as I have implied, very definite and (within certain limits) fairly widespread, but it took personal shape specially in those two. The Nonconformist element among us, by the nature of the case, could not help being an importation ; but, as I look back, I am proud to think that it was greeted with outstretched, helping hands of so much individuality and force. If it gave much to Oxford, there was also not a little for it to receive. There was in particular one eminent Nonconformist lost to his cause too soon, Dr. T. C. Edwards, Principal of the Theological College at Bala, who was a genuine and able disciple of Jowett ; but he dated from the time before the coming of Mansfield. If he had lived that strain of influence would doubtless have been stronger than it was, though—perhaps a little under the surface—it certainly existed. As a formative intellectual influence, that of Edwin Hatch was wider still. Indeed I should be inclined to say that it has been perpetuated in this country especially on the Nonconformist side. At the same time, research as such—scientific research—belongs to no one confession, and it may be equally seen on other lines of descent.

In this way and through these intermediaries I got to know A. M. F., and enjoyed his intimacy all through his Oxford career, which planted Mansfield College on such firm and sure foundations. The most conspicuous public event in which we were directly associated—if that should be called a public event which was really private in its origin and character—was the little conference held at my " lodgings " (as the Canon's houses are called at Christ Church). I have a happy memory of this gathering, though the date of it is fixed in my mind through its coinciding with " the black week " in the Boer War. I remember Canon J. M. Wilson (then of Rochdale, now of Worcester) reading out to a group of us at breakfast the

news of the disaster—I think, at Stormberg. I have said that the origin and character of our meeting were private. I suppose that it may be said to have really grown out of my friendship for my never-to-be-forgotten colleague R. C. Moberly. We were thrown together, and juxtaposition quickly generated admiration, and admiration ripened into close personal friendship. My own antecedents had been evangelical and liberal, though as an undergraduate I had come across some attractive specimens of the "Oxford School" as it was technically called. But never before had the finest characteristics of that school taken such a hold of me as they did at Christ Church—specially in the person of my friend. He was one of the group which had brought out *Lux Mundi;* in other words, he belonged to that wing of the High Church party that was moving in the direction of liberalism. With the wider and more generous outlook which this movement gave, he combined the exquisite and austere devoutness which distinguished the Tractarian party as a whole. He had also a penetrating and keenly logical intellect, with a singular power of grasping principles. These qualities, and the ideas in which they found expression, had such an effect upon me that I was led to hope that they would have a like effect upon others, and that the result of contact would be better knowledge and understanding all round. With these motives I ventured to approach my very different friend Fairbairn, and from the first moment that I did so I had his equally warm and generous concurrence and help. We two, with Moberly, had no difficulty in arranging a conference of three groups of five, representing respectively Nonconformists, Tractarians (for the most part, though not entirely, *Lux Mundi* Tractarians), and other types of Anglican Churchmen. We took a subject which seemed likely to yield points of contact and at the same time points that were open to mutual explanation, "different conceptions of priesthood and sacrifice." Whatever

else our conference may have done, I think it certainly helped to break down barriers, to remove the want of sympathy which comes from intellectual differences, and to inspire mutual respect. Our Nonconformist group consisted of Dr. Fairbairn himself, Dr. S. D. F. Salmond, of Aberdeen, Dr. W. T. Davison (at that time of Handsworth, and now of Richmond), Dr. P. T. Forsyth, of Hackney College, and Mr. Arnold Thomas, of Cambridge and Bristol. I think it was generally agreed that a better selection could not easily have been made, or one that would have brought to our debates greater variety, individuality, moderation, and openness of mind. The Nonconformist members all contributed actively to our discussions. On the other side, the protagonist was undoubtedly Moberly, with Gore and Holland close at his side ; and among the rest it would not perhaps be wrong to single out especially Father F. W. Puller as speaking for the stricter High Churchmen, and Canon J. M. Wilson as a Broad Churchman. If there was just the slightest touch of asperity now and then in our debates it must be confessed that it came from our friend. It could hardly have been otherwise. A stalwart Covenanter on all the moral side of his nature, a fighting man accustomed to the arena, he suddenly found himself plunged in an unfamiliar atmosphere. But he did not really mean it ; and I believe I am right in saying that, if the old distrust and antagonism did at other times come out, they also were not really meant. I believe it was generally felt in Oxford that, in the most critical period of its existence, Mansfield could not have had a wiser, a more patient, or in all practical dealings a more liberal and moderate Head. The successive steps in advance that the College made all came spontaneously and naturally, and not as the result of agitation.

It remains for me only to say a little of our more private intercourse and of the impression which it left upon me. Many were the walks and talks that we had

together in Mesopotamia, up Headington Hill, and in the fields and country round. I learnt something of the manifold activities which his place among Nonconformists imposed upon my friend; of his journeyings to and fro to meetings of important Boards and Committees; to what we should call "ordinations" and "institutions" of his pupils; to the central and governing Assemblies of the Free Churches. I learnt something of the prominent part that he took on Government Commissions and in connection with the organisation of Education, especially in regard to the different colleges and the Central Body of the University of Wales. He often admitted me to his confidence on more domestic questions relating to the working of his own college and our common friends on that body. But the subjects that interested me most were autobiographical details of my friend's early life at the University of Berlin and his account of the great teachers there, such as Dorner and Tholuck, and his comments and the anecdotes that he was able to tell me of other Nonconformist leaders and public men on the Liberal side in the politics of our own day. Perhaps we fraternised even more on the field of learning. I always felt that Fairbairn had a quite unrivalled and even unapproached knowledge on the history of Protestant thought from the Reformation onwards, especially in phases that were almost a sealed book to me, the history of the later Protestant theologians, of men like Grotius and the Arminians, and of the systematic writers of more recent times. We were both interested in current German theology generally, and it was pleasant to compare notes upon it.

Take him for all in all, he was an impressive figure; a strong man such as the north country breeds; of deep family affections, a good friend and a redoubtable foe; staunch to the core, robust beyond all common measures of robustness; bearing a load of multifarious learning, almost unique in certain directions; master of a fervid

Scottish rhetoric, perhaps somewhat diffuse and somewhat apt to be carried away by the jingle of verbal antithesis, but in single paragraphs and sentences often hitting the mark with nervous strokes of elemental force and power. At any time such a man would have been a great gift to the causes that he championed; and at the particular time in which he lived he carried several of those causes through a period of transition that might well have proved too much for shoulders weaker than his own, and landed them in safety with all the promise of permanence and expansion.

## CHAPTER VIII

### EDUCATIONAL WORK

From the time that Fairbairn first came to England he interested himself in the educational problems of his adopted country. He soon found opportunities of becoming acquainted with them in all their prickly variety. Association with Dr. Dale was impossible on any other terms, and many were the discussions between them on various phases of the controversy on elementary education. On the whole, however, Fairbairn was more interested in secondary than in elementary education, in spite of the fact that he later took so prominent a part in the battle over religious teaching in the elementary schools. He visited most of the Nonconformist secondary schools, and was not long in Oxford before he discovered how vital a part they had to play in the life of the Free Churches, and how important it was that Nonconformists should have better opportunities for securing secondary training without being subjected to any form of ecclesiastical pressure. It was only very reluctantly and at the compulsion of conviction that he engaged in this business. From first to last the controversial spirit, which seemed inseparable from it, was distasteful to him. He used to say that they managed these things better in Scotland, and sighed for the saner, kindlier, and more liberal spirit that prevailed in educational circles in the north. Yet he could not but throw in his lot with the Free Churches and help them to fight their battle, though he always regretted the fact that zeal for education should be lost sight of in the dust of the ecclesiastical fight. It is this feeling which was responsible for a certain impatience

of tone observable in many of his utterances on the subject. He was so genuinely anxious for the improvement of education that he could not but regard many of the arguments used on both sides in the controversy as at once irrelevant and impertinent. He seemed therefore to his opponents to be much less conciliatory than he really meant to be, while his friends felt sometimes that he was willing to concede too much for the sake at once of peace and efficiency. He suffered the fate of all those who see that a question has more than one side to it. When he took the Nonconformist standpoint most strongly, he did so as a citizen rather than as an ecclesiastic, as a lover of liberty rather than as the defender of a cause.

As early as the year 1891 at the May meetings of the Congregational Union in London, Fairbairn spoke on the question of secondary education as it affected the Free Churches. He proposed a resolution recommending that a Council of Secondary Education should be formed in order to secure the recognition of the principle of religious equality in all public schools, to improve the administration of local grammar schools, and of those schools which had been created to meet the special needs of Nonconformists, and to raise a fund for providing scholarships at such schools. He urged the necessity of liberating the secondary schools of the country from the dominant influence of the Anglican Church, and said that:

"He had never known the case of a man coming up to the University loyal to his father's faith, losing it while there; but he had known cases, more than he liked to think of, of men coming from schools estranged, and estranged ere their minds were capable of forming a judgment, or considering for themselves the faith by which they were to live. While a boy was yet raw and flexible and unformed, they ought not to put upon him all the burdens and the struggles that ought to be reserved for the strongest and most developed man."

He urged further that now that the Universities were open to all without ecclesiastical distinctions, the same

ought to be the case with the schools; and he pleaded with Nonconformists to take up the question not merely in the interests of their own faith, but as one which was vital to the well-being of the nation at large. At the same time he was thoroughly alive to the necessity of educating young Nonconformists in their own principles, as the following words, written in an Oxford local paper in 1897, show:

"But while Nonconformity or dissent is a civil attitude, we have the greatest possible need to define and to emphasise the reasons which compelled us to assume it and which compel us to maintain it. These are in the strictest sense religious and evangelical reasons. Were it not so, I would not be a dissenter—no, not for a single hour; but, because the attitude is civil while the reasons are religious, I deeply resent the terms Nonconformity and Dissent. They are made, too, to bear a significance, and are used as if they denoted an attitude to the Catholic Church of Christ, when all they denote is an attitude to a civil institution, though that attitude is defined and determined throughout by religious motives and the most sacred loyalty to Christian conscience and law. But since it is so, we ought to be most anxious to educate our own young people in the meaning of Nonconformity and the reasons for it. Education is a toilsome but a most necessary process; without it we are only possible men; through it we become men actual; but the most necessary and toilsome of all education is that which concerns religious belief. It is our beliefs that make us the manner of men we become, and we can educate in religion only as we are religious. We can instil beliefs only as we thoroughly and sincerely believe. We live in times of active change, and our educational methods need re-adaptation to the new needs and the new thought. It is perhaps harder to be a Nonconformist to-day than it has ever been in the history of England. The very decay of the disabilities from which our fathers suffered has made it harder to us than it was to them to dissent. But while it has become harder it has also become more necessary: for the need of the testimony to a Church in

which Christ is supreme was never so great as now. The less sharply principles have to be suffered for, the more the conveniences and the conventionalities of life prevail; and there is nothing so dangerous to the Church as to follow the expedient rather than the right."

As we have already seen Fairbairn was appointed a member of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education in 1894. The Right Hon. Viscount Bryce was its chairman, and among his colleagues were Sir J. T. Hibbert, Sir Henry Roscoe, Sir R. Jebb, The Dean of Manchester, Mr. Michael Sadler, Sir James Yoxall, Lady Frederick Cavendish, and Mrs. H. Sidgwick. The commission was appointed in order to grapple with the chaotic condition into which the secondary education of the country had fallen, in consequence of the progress which was being made in several directions by various independent authorities. The Technical Instruction Acts of 1889 and 1891, along with the Local Taxation Act of 1890, had empowered local authorities to give technical instruction on a wide scale, and had put large sums of money into their hands for the purpose. At the same time they were allowed to interpret the term technical so generously as to cover mathematics, the physical sciences, and modern languages. Meanwhile, the Department of Science and Art had been moving in the same direction, and, by its largely increased grants, had encouraged the further development of secondary education along the same lines. This process was continued by the establishment of the newer universities, and under the pressure of the better type of School Boards, higher grade elementary schools had arisen to act as a bridge between the elementary schools and the universities. The Commission had to take account of all these varied factors which were at work and to make recommendations with a view to co-ordinating their activities. It ultimately reported in favour (1) of unifying all the various authorities in one central bureau, and

of appointing a Council of Education to advise the Minister of Education on certain professional points; (2) of setting up more centralised local authorities for secondary education in the form of committees of County Councils with a co-opted element; (3) of forming a teachers' register, with a view to the better training of secondary school teachers, and also a classified register of schools by a regular system of inspection and examination.

Fairbairn attended the meetings of the Commission with great regularity, and took his full part in its proceedings. Though appointed as a Nonconformist, his interest in the matter was throughout educational rather than ecclesiastical, and he contributed very largely to the wisdom and unanimity of the conclusions to which the Commissioners came. Of his work in this connection Viscount Bryce writes:

"In 1894–5 I had, as Chairman of a Royal Commission on Secondary Education of which Dr. Fairbairn was a member, an opportunity of observing his capacity for handling affairs with tact and promptitude. He had been placed on that Commission as the ecclesiastical representative of English Nonconformity, together with another gentleman whose experience had been that of an able educational administrator. The custom of putting on such Commissions persons who are understood to embody and are expected to advocate a particular set of views has, of course, some advantages, but it sometimes tends to a controversial and even pugnacious attitude on the part of the champions. Nothing of the sort appeared in Dr. Fairbairn. He never showed a trace of partisanship in the discussions even of the most controversial questions, and spoke not as the standard-bearer of any section of opinion, but as one honestly wishful to arrive at the best and fairest solution. This spirit was fully reciprocated by those eminent colleagues of his on the Commission whose views least agreed with his own: and so it befel not only that through the protracted debates there was not a word spoken with any-

thing but courtesy and friendliness, but that the Commission had the very unusual felicity of presenting a unanimous report. He had been charged with the drafting of a part of that document, and performed his task with singular ability and to the satisfaction of the whole body."

Fairbairn's connection with the political struggles over elementary education centres round the legislation of the Conservative Government in 1897 and 1902. Ever since the Act of 1870, which set up the dual system of Board and Voluntary Schools, those who were responsible for the latter had found their burdens increasing. Even after the establishment of Free Education, when they, as well as the managers of Government schools, received the Fee Grant in aid, their expenses for maintenance and upkeep continued to grow. This was caused mainly by the increasing efficiency of the Board Schools, which led to increased demands on the part of the Education Department. At the same time the large amount of State aid which was now received by all schools, and the fact that the Church schools were not always as efficient as their rivals, made voluntary support much harder to obtain. Things reached something like a crisis in 1895, when the supporters of Church schools were loud in their demands that the Government should do something to relieve their "intolerable strain." At the end of the year 1895 and the beginning of 1896 Fairbairn wrote a series of letters to the *Times* urging that education was the business of the nation rather than the Church, and that it should be put on a really national basis. He refers to them as follows in letters to his eldest son:

"*November* 29, 1895.

"My first letter has appeared in the *Times*. *Times* was angry with it. Charged me with taking a rancorous view of the Church and not being subdued by the 'pellucid air' of Oxford, etc. etc. As someone said, the adjective was not very happy, had been struck out in a hurry by

some wise night scribe. It's a good thing hard words break no bones. I hit Salisbury hardest, but said of the Church only what was generous, so far at least as one's theme allowed. I expect of course a good mauling from the clerics, but we must fight to win. Salisbury begins to feel, so I think, as if he had put his hand into a hornet's nest. He was guilty of an extraordinary piece of *gaucherie* the very day before my letter appeared. I only wish the report had appeared in time for me to use it. The Methodists sent a deputation, which he received not too kindly, and spoke to as if he were not Prime Minister but Archbishop. 'You Methodists come to us Anglicans,' he said, as if he were there purely as a Churchman, and not simply in his character as a statesman representing all creeds. This is the misery of the situation, men feel as if politics were not a science of the common good, but the means of winning a sectarian victory and serving some sectarian end. This, however, makes our question clearer and our issue more definite."

"*December* 5, 1895.

"I have got well abused by the Church and Tory papers for my letter. The *Spectator* regretted the 'bitterness' of my tone. The *Guardian* said I was 'angry.' Our own side said, 'They abused because they could not answer,' that I had 'riddled the bishops' memorial as with a Maxim gun,' that the letter was 'a matter of paramount importance'—all of which means that the truth lies midway between them."

"*December* 19, 1895.

"Enclosed is a second letter on education. The *Times* much more courteous, so the *Guardian*. Former said I was 'calm and dignified,' latter more 'sweetness and light.' What had riled the *Times* was reference to Salisbury. Saw Caird yesterday. He very pleased with my attitude on education. So Fremantle, from whom I have just had a letter."

In 1896 Sir John Gorst introduced a Bill proposing to set up county education authorities side by side with the School Boards, and to entrust to them a special aid

grant for the benefit of voluntary schools. The Bill met with little support in any quarter, though the second reading was carried by a large majority, and was withdrawn.

It was in reference to this Bill that Fairbairn wrote an article on "The Policy of the Education Bill" in the *Contemporary Review* of June, 1896, in which he strongly controverted the whole clerical policy. The article was written very hurriedly and in a white heat, but it is one of his very best. He gives the following account of its writing in a letter to his son John:

"*May* 19, 1896.

"Bunting asked me for a review of the education question for the *Contemporary*. I could not get things to go. So much was uncertain and difficult. On Tuesday the Bill passed second reading with a thumping majority, which set up one's feeling. And I got over Cox (his secretary), dictated to him all last Saturday. He sat up all night and wrote it out. I rose early on Sunday morning: worked at it till church time, began again after lunch: worked till four, began again at five and worked up till midnight, when I posted it—the quickest bit of work I ever did. But I much fear it will be in some places too tart, in others very broken, and I am anxious to see how it looks in type. In any case we are in for the hardest fight we ever had on this question, and in the country we shall have everything to do in the way of creating resistance. And there are few to help us in public."

With reference to this article he wrote as follows to Dr. Sanday:

*To Dr. Sanday.*

"*June* 18, 1896.

"I meant to have answered your long and kind letter on my *Contemporary* article, but my hands have been very full and my energies by no means at their usual pitch. Your sermon at St. Mary's I read with entire sympathy, and I share all your desire that we may, as far as possible, escape from polemics. Were Oxford my only world this polemical production would never have appeared. Here one can live at peace with all men, and,

as scholars or thinkers, we can come to our different questions from different and complementary points of view, without any result save helping each other to fuller views of truth. But it is the intrusion of the rude rough-and-tumble of the public arena which is so disturbing. But may I ask you to look at the matter from my place? Our people are in many places a feeble folk, but in some they are very potent, and they have used their potency in certain great towns to build up a system of schools which are an honour and safeguard to the State. But suddenly this Bill has brought them face to face with two things—the suppression or limitation of the Boards which have erected this system of schools and their final exclusion from all share in two-thirds of the elementary schools in England, which yet they are compelled to use and are to be compelled to support. Now it is certain that this is a situation that will not be accepted in a country where all the legislative institutions are representative: the solution which is sought in religious interests is still sought in civil courts and by parliamentary methods: and if I am anxious to keep religion and the Church out of the arena of party politics it is out of love to both. I have not said a single thing about the action of the clergy which has not been said in the *Guardian* and the *Church Times*, or in letters like Canon Gregory's in to-day's *Times*, though it is there said from an entirely different point of view. But what I fear, if I do not foresee, is that this Education policy will produce all the more, if it is successful, long and bitter conflicts over Church and religion in our civil and public life, and on this account I thought there was more brotherliness in frank speech than in silence. Do excuse this long letter. I did not mean to write it when I began, but it has grown out of all decent proportions and altogether out of the feeling that I would like you to feel the matter as it appeared to me. May I not plead that the very difficulties which have since emerged among the very supporters of the Bill show that even such a criticism as mine was not without reason? But I have said what I had to say, and ask you to believe that no more reluctant pleader ever attempted the task he undertook."

Soon after the withdrawal of this Bill Fairbairn spoke

at a conference of the National Education Emergency Committee in London. After a brief reference to "the late unlamented Bill," he went on to propose that no increased grants should be given from Imperial funds for elementary education, save on the condition that they should secure increased efficiency and not merely relieve local managers of their share of the cost, and also be accompanied by some public right of management; that any proposal to give rate aid to voluntary schools should also carry with it the right of the ratepayers to share in the management of the schools; and that in the case of schools to which all the people in the district are compelled to send their children the management should be in the hands of those who maintain and use them. Such proposals, he argued, were called for in view of the demands which were still being made on the Government by the friends of Church schools. At an Anglican conference held a few days previously resolutions had been passed urging on the Government the provision of statutory aid for all elementary schools at a rate of not less than six shillings per child, and asking that, in the case of the voluntary schools, the reception of such aid should not interfere with the right of the Church to appoint teachers. In other words, the aim of the conference was to put voluntary schools in exactly the same financial position as Board Schools and yet retain the management in sectarian hands. The answer of the Government to these demands was given in the following year by the Voluntary Schools Act, which provided for a special aid grant from the Imperial exchequer of five shillings per head of the scholars in average attendance at these schools.

Fairbairn took a considerable part in the fruitless opposition to this Bill. He recognised that it involved much more than a mere money question, and he put the Nonconformist case against it in two extremely effective letters addressed to Sir R. B. Finlay, the Solicitor-General.

"OXFORD,

"*March* 9, 1897.

"SIR,

"Would you kindly allow one who has no claim to be numbered among either politicians or statesmen to address to you a few words upon the Education Bill?

"I have presumed to select you as the recipient of what is to me a new and most venturesome excursion into the realm of letters, not because you are Solicitor-General in the Government which is promoting the Bill, nor because you are one of the spokesmen chosen for the defence, but because you are the most conspicuous representative of Unionism sitting for a Scotch constituency. And it is to such Scotch representatives that I desire more particularly to address my appeal.

"I understand Unionism—excuse so inelegant a word, it is not a coinage of mine—to mean the policy which maintains the legislative Union of the three kingdoms of England and Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, on the ground that only so can equal laws be enacted and enforced, equal justice be administered, and equal freedom be secured to all classes and to all subjects within these realms. It is on this broad and general ground that my appeal to you is based.

"But besides this general ground of appeal, there is a particular reason why I turn to the men who represent the Unionism of Scotland. The vast majority of the Scotch people, certainly not less than 90 per cent, are in matters of religious faith and church order as nearly as possible one with those who in England offer the most strenuous resistance to this Bill; and they do it for reasons precisely identical with those that would determine the policy of Scotland were the same question, embodied in a similar Bill, before the Scotch constituencies.

"You know well, none can know better, the unreality of the cry that opposition to this Bill proceeds from opposition to religious education. You know on the contrary that the vital root of the antagonism is belief in the need of a solid and healthy and living education in religion. You come of a good Presbyterian stock, and you know what it is to sit under a minister of saintly character,

high purposes, and strong convictions. Just try to imagine the Newhaven you used to know as an English village, and Dr. James Fairbairn as the Pastor of its Free Church. You will remember how full of rich and even gracious beneficence was his life, and how well he realised the ideal of a pastor who was the father of his people. You know how deeply he would have been moved if the only school available for the education of the children of his flock had been an Anglican or a Roman Catholic school. You know how he would have protested, nay, how he would have resisted in every possible way the law which drove his children into such a school; how aggrieved he would have been by it being the only public elementary school permitted in the village and by it being, besides, a school which while maintained by public money was yet made so independent of public control that neither he, whose spiritual children were forced into it, nor any of his people, nor any representative of ratepayer or taxpayer, could have any voice or part or influence in its management. And you know how insulted he would have been had his resistance to these cumulative injustices been set down to his hostility to religious education. And wherein does this imaginary case differ from what our pastors and people have to endure in thousands of English villages and in not a few English towns? Do you really think such a state of things would be tolerated for a single hour in any Scotch town or village? I hope you do not think that this is intended for a mere vulgar *argumentum ad hominem;* it has no such mean and insignificant purpose, but is an appeal to the experience that ought to qualify you to understand the real reasons and motives of the resistance offered by the Free Churches of England to the Bill you have been so ironically charged to champion. You remember Adam Smith's doctrine of sympathy as the regulative principle in morals. Put yourself in our place, and then ask—'Is this Bill not a contradiction of the most rudimentary principles of civil justice and religious liberty?'

"But let me proceed with my purpose and try to translate this English education question into the terms of a Scotch one. It is necessary to do this in order that we may

discover how far you are pursuing a policy of equal laws, equal justice, and equal freedom for England and Scotland.

"Let us imagine then that the Act of 1872 had created this state of things in Scotland: Established efficient School Boards in the great towns, but in most of the smaller towns and in the counties or rural districts—except a few poor parishes in the West Highlands and in certain very recent mining towns and villages—had planted neither School Boards nor Board Schools. Instead, the only elementary schools which are mainly supported by public money are, as to control or management, in the hands, not even of the heritors, but of the clergy. The parish minister is, *ex-officio*, manager of the school; he engages and dismisses the teacher, who is, in the strictest sense, a servant of his will; he and his 'womankind' can enter the school when they will, criticise the master and his discipline, and even take certain classes out of his hands. The master's continuance in office may be made to depend not simply on character and efficiency, but on his being a communicant in the Established Church and consenting to act as session clerk, or precentor, or, occasionally, even as beadle. While the Established Church minister is thus supreme, the minister neither of the Free Church nor of the United Presbyterian has any *locus standi* in anything that concerns the school; it is the parish minister's, and the clergy of other churches must stand aside while he manages it. The public who pay the taxes that support the school, and the parents who supply the children, are as powerless in its management as the ministers of the voluntary churches. In such a case a 'conscience clause' might in a manner protect the children, but no 'conscience clause' could protect the public or the parents, or control the managers. As to the cost of the education, the State pays five-sixths of the whole; for the other sixth, which the minister does his best to levy on the whole parish, he has all the tremendous power over the destinies of the people which control of the one accessible school gives.

"Let us attempt to conceive this as the existing state of matters, and I put it to you, would Scotland stand it for a moment? Would she, under any pretence whatever,

allow the clergy of any single church to have control over four-sevenths of all her publicly supported elementary schools? Would she submit to her schoolmasters being degraded into the hired servants of these same clergy, dismissible by them at will, even while paid out of the public taxes? Would she allow capable men to be, by the very fact that they were of the Free or United Presbyterian Church, excluded from the office of teachers in these schools? In a word, would she permit the most vital matter of her national well-being to be the property and preserve of a sectarian clergy?

* * * * * *

"Now, conceive Scotland with almost all its rural and many of its urban schools managed by the local episcopal incumbent, while five-sixths of the whole cost of maintenance is paid by the State. Conceive, further, that the State proposes to increase its grant to a degree that will abolish the need of supplementing the income even by a single sixth; suppose, further, that these incumbents are to be allowed to federate, that their federations are to be entitled to receive the imperial funds intended for these schools and to distribute them as if they were their own—what would the country say? I have asked you to conceive the case, but is it a case that can be conceived? Could you by any stretch of imagination represent it to yourself as a situation accepted by the intelligence of the Scotch people? Yet it is exactly the situation you, as Solicitor-General, speaking on the floor of the House of Commons, have been persuading the representatives of certain Scotch constituencies to perpetuate and even to aggravate in England.

"Excuse me if I seem to write sharply and personally. I mean to be neither sharp nor personal, but simply to state the case as I see and feel it. It is a melancholy experience to me to find myself writing to a politician on a question of party politics, but the most melancholy thing about it is that our politics have laid so mischievous a hand on the education of the people. My own ideal and dream is to be silent on the matters which divide parties, and cultivate the studies which are the real ends for which one lives. But at a moment of this kind silence

were cowardly, and speech that is not as plain as one can make it a thing too tame to justify the silence being broken. You, and the men to whom I now appeal, have a great opportunity in your hands—the opportunity of making English legislation more just to the men and the churches who in England represent the ideal of religion and church which has created and governed the Scotch nation. The people known now as 'Dissenters,' and now as 'Nonconformists,' have had a long and wearisome struggle to gain the most common civil rights. They had seemed to be at last successful; and it appeared possible that they should now begin to lose the temper of those who have to do battle for the mere privilege to live and think and worship as free citizens of a free state; and that they should begin to gain the larger and sweeter mind of those who live and enjoy their religious freedom without any burden or badge of shameful civil disqualification. But it seems as if we were again about to fall on evil days and evil tongues, and should have to resume the sad and harassing warfare against uniformity, against tests, against the degradation of religion by the use of the most sacred mysteries of our faith as terms and conditions of holding a civil office, such as a mastership in a school which the State endows and supports. May I not say that here is a noble function for statesmanship, even though it be the statesmanship of a time when party governs the State? Our need in England is to have the feuds of centuries healed, the strifes and the spites of sects buried and forgotten; but how can this be unless in educational, as in all other legislation, the State cease to distinguish between sect and sect, and begin to know only the free citizens that love her honour and obey her laws.

"With every expression of respect and regard,
"I remain, dear Sir,
"Most sincerely yours,
"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

In his reply to this letter Sir Robert Finlay urged that there was no real parallel between the educational conditions of Scotland and those in England, and that in all

the Scotch Board Schools denominational education was given in so far as the shorter Catechism was taught. He also characterised Fairbairn's argument as "an attack on the educational settlement effected in England by the Act of 1870," and insisted that that settlement "must be accepted as a fact until the country is prepared for what would be an educational revolution."

In a second letter Fairbairn took up these points one by one. It was on the very fact of the difference between the two countries that he had insisted, in order to enforce his plea for equal justice and fair dealing in both. He admits the point as to the shorter Catechism; but, in spite of the fact that it is taught, the Scotch schools are not denominational in the sense that the voluntary schools are in England. They do not belong to any church, but are, in the strictest and fullest sense, public schools. And there is no such religious difference in Scotland as there is in England between the Established Church and the Nonconformists. As to the Act of 1870 it has already been revolutionised. It intended that the voluntary schools should remain voluntary, and not that they should be supported from the public purse.

"Nothing would have shocked the men of 1870 more than a proposal to endow sectarian schools wholly out of public money and yet to leave them wholly sectarian. That is a policy which England has never been asked to approve, and which touches the conscience too tenderly ever to be capable of settlement by an occasional majority in Parliament."

He then concludes:

"So far I have been concerned with general questions, but now pass to what you term my charges against the present Bill.

"(1) You say that 'so far from aggravating any evils that may exist in connection with voluntary schools, the Bill tends to remove them.' May I enquire what are the evils it tends to remove? You specify none, and I know none, unless it be dependence on those subscriptions

which were thought to justify their claim to sectarian management. But this is a private good which involves a public injury. Of the evils here discussed all are aggravated, and means for their amelioration are withheld.

" (2) You say that ' so far from tightening clerical control the Bill confers upon the Education Department powers which must tend rather to diminish it.' Indeed, what powers ? The proposed associations will be mainly clerical bodies ; and they will be much harder to fight, with a more potent capacity for being disagreeable than the managers of single schools. We all know the excellence of the Education Department, but we also know its limitations. The central authority may be strong, but local interests, spirit, and resources are still stronger ; and the new ecclesiastical bodies only mean so much the more clerical and so much the less central control.

" (3) You say that ' so far from enhancing grants without securing efficiency in education, the Bill is expressly directed to securing efficiency.' But in what way ? It is not enough to refer to ' the Education Department ' ; no one is less inclined than I to doubt its ' competency for such a task,' but there are things it cannot do, for they lie outside its province and beyond its reach. Good teachers, you yourself being witness, are necessary to the efficiency of a school ; but increased grants won't buy good teachers, if the conditions of service remain an offence to highminded and honourable men. It is the worst extravagance to spend more money on a bad system, and no educational system is good which is rooted in distrust and in the degradation of the teacher.

" I come back, then, to the question of principle, the principle that the function of the legislature is to pursue a policy of equity and to frame just laws. You occupy a high and influential position ; you represent a people who have suffered many things for conscience' sake, and who are capable of much because they have so suffered. Unless I mistake my countrymen, they would not wish their representatives to help to place upon their spiritual kin burdens they themselves would refuse to bear. May I plead with you to look at this question not simply as members of a party, but as men whose supreme duty it is to be just to the humblest village pastor and the meanest

peasant who finds the one inspiration of his lowly life in the village chapel? From your action indirect consequences flow you little dream of, and would deeply regret; but there is evidence daily accumulating to show that this policy of yours is making the lot of the man who is judged to be a 'Dissenter' in England, but would be a 'Churchman' in Scotland, harder than it was before. 'Dissent' has been made to disqualify for office in connection with public charities, whose governors, otherwise honourable men, are learning the bitter lesson that they may deal with it as a civil disability not very remote from crime. I write this with a full sense of the responsibility involved in making so grave a statement, and I make it as one who does not speak for himself, but for men who bear the yoke, yet may not complain. And so I close by asking you and those who sit with you to judge the legislation you have hitherto supported, as men sprung from a people whose dearest treasures are justice, freedom, and religion."

These letters show how clearly Fairbairn grasped the points at issue in the controversy, and how determined he was to deal with the question on the ground of principle rather than on that of educational convenience or political expediency. His use of the analogy of Scotland was perhaps unfortunate. It was only thoroughly intelligible to Scotchmen, and misled others besides his opponents. But to anyone who carefully reads what he wrote it is perfectly clear, and is far other than a mere debating device. His Scotch experience, however, led him in one respect, at least, to differ seriously from some of the more logical Nonconformists, such as Dr. Dale and the Birmingham school generally. He was not prepared for anything like a secular solution, and for some time, at any rate, contended that the provision of religious instruction in the schools was a legitimate function of the State, though he afterwards modified his views on this point.

Fairbairn took an active part in the agitation against Mr. Balfour's Education Bill of 1902. This measure,

though it has been on the Statute Book for some years, is still the subject of acute controversy, and it is hardly yet possible to speak of it dispassionately or to judge it in its true proportions. We are not concerned here with the new educational machinery it set up, save in so far as it affected the voluntary schools and raised once more the old religious controversy in a very acute form. The Act abolished the old School Boards and made the Local Education Authority Committees of the County and Borough Councils. This gave to the ratepayers only a very indirect control over the schools, and had the anticipated result of largely destroying popular interest in elementary education. But the chief objection to the Act from the point of view of Nonconformists was that the denominational schools now became voluntary only in name. Henceforth they were to be mainly supported by the money of the ratepayers, while still remaining under the control of the sect to which they belonged. This was regarded as a direct contravention of the principle that taxation and representation should go together, and was objected to on this purely civic principle by many who were not Nonconformists. It was chiefly on this ground that Fairbairn's opposition to the Act was based. He wrote two letters to the *Times* explaining his views in full, and he was the spokesman of a Nonconformist deputation to the Prime Minister, Mr. Balfour, which became historic. The case of the deputation was presented in a document which Fairbairn had drawn up and of which Viscount Bryce wrote to him that it was "a dignified and impressive protest which strikes me, even more than when I first read it, as one of the finest State-papers of our time." The following extracts give the substance of the address:

"We object to the Bill, especially so far as it relates to Elementary Education, not in part or in its details, but as a whole; to its purpose, to its principles, and to the means by which it proposes to realise them. We did

not willingly submit to the Act of 1870 ; on the contrary, we should have preferred that Parliament had made School Boards universal, education national, everywhere the concern of all the citizens rather than of the Churchmen of any denomination. But, though we failed to obtain what we wished, we did not refuse what was given. Because of our desire to see education legislatively sanctioned and established, we submitted to a double compromise, on the one hand as regards religious teaching, and on the other as regards the continuance of voluntary schools as schools supported by the State. To that compromise we have, in spite of our original aversion and chronic dissatisfaction, honourably and loyally adhered —for no attempt to disturb it has ever proceeded from us ; but, notwithstanding our loyal and honourable adherence to the settlement then achieved, we are now—after a series of provocative derangements of that settlement through legislative benevolence to voluntary schools—threatened with a final disruption of it. We are, therefore, faced by a situation which, had we foreseen, we should have striven, *ab initio*, with all our power, effectually to prevent. And the situation thus created, though it deeply concerns us, comes upon us not as a proposal for a second series of compromises, but as legislation which the State is invited to enact and enforce as if we had no standing ground in the matter, no children to educate, no liberties to conserve, no rights which Parliament is bound to consider and to guard.

We further object to the Bill, because—for extensive and even populous districts of the country—it entrusts to a Church which embraces only a portion of the people, functions and duties affecting the people as a whole and belonging emphatically to the State whose concern is with us all ; because it excludes the parents from the management or any direct share in the control of the schools where their children are taught ; because it tends to shut out from the teaching profession, to its immense impoverishment, multitudes to whom religion is the supreme matter of conscience and the master reality of life ; because it increases the range, the burden and the disqualifying force of ecclesiastical tests ; and because it endows out of public rates and taxes and establishes in

the schools a class that may be termed the minor clergy of an already endowed and established Church.

"These are points which touch the character and quality of the education, besides affecting large classes of the community. This Bill would present to many men of sensitive character an inexorable moral barrier in the way of applying for educational posts bound up with the acceptance of the Anglican creeds; and such men of sensitive conscientiousness are often, by reason of this very quality, the best teachers. Where tests reign education suffers; you, sir, know well the effect they had on both the teachers and the teachings of the Universities, and the benefits that came from their repeal. And we do not need to argue that what proved disastrous to the higher education cannot be good for the lower. The reasons against tests in Universities apply with greater force to their retention in elementary schools. For they can be retained there only by the help of public money raised, by taxation or rating, from persons who conscientiously object both to the tests and to the formularies they are intended to guard. It is no answer to say that the State does not pay for the teaching of the formularies or the religion; for this delicate distinction cannot be carried out in apportioning the maintenance provided by the State; and, what is far more germane to the question, the effect of this Bill will be to create or perpetuate an atmosphere, a dignity and an influence, which shall do more to commend special forms and dogmas than any attempt at systematic inculcation. One of the arguments for a Catholic University endowed out of taxes, is that a Catholic atmosphere will be created in the schools where Catholic youth are educated; and how is this atmosphere created save by the people who manage, and the people who teach? But here the proposal is, by means of funds which the civil authority is to raise from all sorts and classes of people, and by legislation which Parliament is to be advised to pass and enforce, to create an Anglican atmosphere in schools where the pupils may be Anglican or Nonconformist or neither. Need you wonder that there are men who object to be either taxed or rated for any such purpose?

"But we also object to the Bill on the broad ground of

what may be regarded as constitutional practice. When the Government appealed to the country in 1900, it made no proposals touching education, or so much as hinted at a radical change in educational policy. The main issue was the war in South Africa, and large numbers of Nonconformists voted for the Government who, if the education question, especially in the shape it has now assumed, had been formally presented to them, would have either abstained altogether or voted on the other side. We urge this in justice to many in our own ranks, and also as a mode of expressing our belief that, in a matter so grave, or we may even say so revolutionary, and so vitally affecting the well-being of our State, the primary duty of those in office is to consult the electors before attempting to legislate concerning it.

"This, sir, we need not assure you, is not to us a question between rival Churches, but between citizens and the State. Had it been otherwise we should not have come here. The religious differences between the Church of England and ourselves are not differences which legislation can decide or even Parliament discuss. It has been said by more than one prelate of the Established Church that they will, when the Bill becomes law, deal fairly with Nonconformists. But we do not acknowledge any right on the part of that Church to deal with us fairly or otherwise. Our appeal is to the State; we are its citizens, and before it all are equal; its function is to show respect neither to sects nor to persons; but to guard the liberties of the meanest subject and administer equal justice to all. We ask no Church for consideration and will accept none at its hands. We ask from the State justice and freedom; we can ask no less; it can give nothing that we value more.

"We have come to you, not lightly, but under grave moral compulsion due to the feeling that we are face to face with a crisis more serious than any that has arisen in our history since 1662 and the Act of Uniformity. We use no threat and we make no prediction. But we desire you to understand the feeling of the Free Churches in their relation to this Bill. You have the power to pass it —we do not question that for a moment, though the very power of a majority is the measure of its responsibility.

But to carry legislation is one thing, and to prevent the disasters it is sure to entail is quite another thing. And we, as loyal sons of our State and people, who know what must happen if the Bill be carried, come to you with our claim for justice and for the consideration which is our due. We love education as we love religion; we have worked for it, suffered for it, denied ourselves to secure it for ourselves and for our sons. We know that of all things it can least flourish in storm, especially the storms begotten by the war of sects; and there is nothing that would so grieve us as to see it by the deliberate act of Parliament sacrificed to so unkindly a strife. But we should not be worthy of our citizenship or of the interview which your courtesy has granted us, if we did not frankly say that to the legislation which creates an ecclesiastical monopoly in the schools of the people we will not submit."

To this appeal the Prime Minister's reply was quite uncompromising. He would not admit that there was any real grievance under the Bill, and he gently satirised the idea that there could be conscientious objection to its provisions. He bade the deputation trust those to whom the administration of the Bill would be committed, and he assured them that the Government had no intention to be unfair to any section of the community, least of all to the large and influential interests which the deputation represented. These were fair words, such as Mr. Balfour was a master of, but the Nonconformists at that time were in no mood to listen to them. Fairbairn's "we will not submit," was much more to their liking, and exactly expressed their temper. The Act was met with a widespread movement of Passive Resistance. Men refused to pay that portion of their rates which they judged would be allocated for sectarian teaching, and large numbers suffered the distraint of their goods, and some imprisonment. Of this action Fairbairn decidedly approved. He could not share in it because he did not himself pay rates. But very many stalwart

spirits were encouraged to persevere because they knew that they had his moral support.

In September, 1902, the Congregational Union met at Glasgow. One of the chief sessions was devoted to the Education Bill, and in the absence of the Chairman, Principal Caleb Scott, through illness, Fairbairn was called to preside. He delivered a magnificent address in which he combated the whole policy of the Bill on religious and educational grounds. Speaking in Scotland he had much to say of what education had meant there :

" I too am signally grateful that this question falls to be discussed among my own people in this land of Scotland. I cannot forget that every principle that has shaped my life and formed my mind was learned here, and in thinking of education I am not one whit ashamed to say I live in England, but I think as a son of the Northern race, who owes all his manhood to the people from whom he sprang. Well, then, have we not cause in Scotland to love and honour education ? What were we before our common schools were founded ? We were a people, shall I say, ' red in tooth and claw ' ? Our history was but chaos and conflict, and the conflict was often but a fight of carrion crows. The men who made our schools created our people. He who bade them be, formed the Scottish nation and Scottish men. In Glasgow, in the presence of its ancient University, can I fail to remember names like Andrew Melville, the scholar of the Renaissance ; like John Cameron, known on the Continent and at home, a great divine and a great creator of divinity ; like Robert Bailey, sweetest of letter gossips that ever talked luminously on paper ; and Adam Smith, scholar and economist, founder of free trade and all the blessings that have followed it. Thomas Reid, father of Scotch philosophy—father and son, for it is older than he, for have we not all learned it and brought it with us into the world in our very blood ? And through Scotland what names are known, names of people made in the common schools, of the common stock ? Robert Burns may be an Ayrshire ploughman, he was first and foremost

a Scottish schoolboy. Walter Scott may have dreamed of chivalry, but his father was an Edinburgh scrivener, his grandfather was a doctor, and his great-grandfather was an honest Presbyterian minister. James Hogg was a shepherd of Ettrick; so too Mungo Park—the spot where he was born stands not far from where James Hogg saw the light; Thomas Carlyle—all his reminiscences, the sweetest and tenderest, are those connected with the old school at Annan, and the man who had been there before him, Edward Irving. Did not the common schools of Scotland make the herd-boy on the braes of Abernethy who founded a great family of Scotch divines and literary men who bore the name of Brown? Did not Thomas Chalmers learn in the school at Anstruther, ere he went to the University of St. Andrews, how his people thought, and what his people needed? Yes, we have had good reason to know what education can do for a people. It has made us, and if we are as a race revered at home and trusted abroad, it is because schools have made us, and we had education in our very blood."

Soon after the passing of the Act, in December, 1902, Fairbairn published a long and carefully reasoned pamphlet entitled, *Education, National or Denominational*, in which he gave a summary of the educational history as it affected Nonconformists in this country, and after showing how the recent Act contravened their principles, proceeded to set forth the policy which he believed they ought to pursue. The pamphlet was introduced by the following preface:

"The Education Bill is now numbered among the laws of the land, but whatever may be its fate as a law, it is certain that its enactment means the beginning rather than the end of controversy. The Prime Minister has favoured us with a *pièce justificative*[1] which has appeared since this pamphlet was in type. I confess that I have read this *apologia pro lege sua* with acute distress, not

[1] As soon as the Act was passed Mr. Balfour wrote a pamphlet in explanation and defence of it, in which he made a personal attack on Dr. Clifford, the eminent Baptist minister, and criticised very strongly his style of controversy.

indeed as a statesman or a politician, for I am neither, nor as a Nonconformist, though I am one ; but simply as a citizen who is loyal to the State and who loves the people. Whatever Mr. Balfour may think as to the man he criticises, he does not understand the mind the man stands for, or the temper he expresses. If he understood, he would be the less inclined to flout either : understanding neither he fights as one who beats the air. The temper which has for three hundred years fought for freedom and justice, and which has, though often beaten, never been vanquished, is surely not altogether ignoble or the thing entitled to the sort of answer the British Prime Minister has not thought it beneath him to give. I desire to see dignity and discretion, as well as largeness of soul at the head of our public affairs, whatever party may be in office : especially when the questions to be dealt with lie, like education, so near the heart of all our well-being, both personal and collective. There is nothing I more profoundly deplore than the heedlessness which has let loose upon us the old denominational and sectarian animosities. Would it were still possible to turn our legislators back from the evil way upon which they have entered, to the old paths of pleasantness and peace."

At the close of his pamphlet Fairbairn set forth in outline the principles on which he believed any education policy that would be acceptable to Nonconformists must be based. It is a very interesting statement and shows how definitely he had adopted the view of English Nonconformity, while yet retaining his own feeling as to the place which religious teaching should occupy in the work of the schools. He urged (1) that the local authority for education should be really representative ; (2) that this authority should be supreme in its own province and have the power of the purse (this he defined as meaning that there should be no denominational managers in any school, with control over its religious work and atmosphere) ; (3) that all teachers should be appointed by the education authority, and appointed

only on educational grounds ; (4) that the same teachers should be responsible for both secular and religious teaching ; (5) that the people should administer their own schools through directly elected representatives, and that the people should be trusted to say what they want and to deal fairly with all the interests involved.

The part which Fairbairn played in this controversy was warmly welcomed not only in the Nonconformist fighting line, but by many who were by no means enamoured of the form which opposition to the Act was taking. This was especially the case in Scotland, where the situation, as it presented itself to English Nonconformity, was not always easily understood. Of Fairbairn's address to Mr. Balfour, Dr. Taylor Innes wrote :

" It is many years since I seem to have read anything so cogent—so much red-hot logic. It has had a great effect here in Scotland, where we had been embarrassed by the specialities of your history and ours. Rainy, in particular, has brought his assembly to be unanimous on your side."

About the same time Principal Rainy himself wrote to Fairbairn :

" I have for some time wished to say to you how much I sympathise with your friends and you in England in reference to the Education Bill. It seems to me to be an outrage. Here we are not so directly concerned, but, as far as I know, there is general agreement in our Church. Probably it is not necessary for me to say all this to you, but it can do no harm."

Letters in a similar spirit of sympathy were received from Lord Reay, Viscount Bryce, and not a few leading Anglicans. In reply to one such from Dr. Sanday, Fairbairn wrote :

" *January* 6, 1903.

" It was a real pleasure to me to receive your generous letter. I too often wished to talk about the subject, but the supreme difficulty is to get face to face, past, as it

were, the initial barriers. What one feels in the new situation is how this difficulty is increased, when it ought to be lessened. But much will depend on the working of the Act, and on the ability of both sides to get nearer each other. This is always a hard thing to do, and has been made much harder by recent events. The time may come when a wise mediator may speak a word in reason, but the time is not yet. The pamphlet cost me many anxious weeks, but I am not clear that it appears when it can accomplish any good.

"I see Lathbury in this week's *Pilot* gives my argument a turn it was never intended to take, just as my colleague Massie[1] dissents from my plea for the retention of religion in the schools. I would say to Lathbury, If Scotland is Presbyterian, England is Christian: and it ought to be as possible for us as Christians to have a system of education religious while national, as for a Presbyterian people to have a system which is religious yet not Presbyterian. It is to me as little possible, by Act of Parliament, to shut religion out of schools as to shut up schools to a special type of religion. And so I differ as much from those who would do the one, as from those who would do the other."

Fairbairn so far tried to carry out his professions in regard to the Act, as to allow himself to be co-opted to the Education Committee for the County of Oxford. But he found, as he expected, that the Act was really unworkable in certain important respects, and, after a brief experience, he felt compelled to send in his resignation. Living in Oxford, he found himself out of touch with the schools in the county, and it was quite impossible

[1] Dr. Massie had written to Fairbairn as follows:

"I differ from you radically in the view that the provision for religion is one of the functions of the State. I will put aside just now all the wider phases of this view, and confine myself to that which concerns the schools. Your view is, as it were, passed through the sieve of local option, but it remains in principle the same. And for the teacher it means religious tests, tests to be determined by the local State: for the scholars it means conscience clauses and intra-mural inequality. Further and worse, it means (as it seems to me) a recognition of the theory that any local authority, however heathen in spirit, has the function of deciding upon and providing for religious teaching."

to visit them and to obtain acquaintance with their working at first hand. And yet he was expected to discuss and vote on questions closely affecting them, especially on financial matters, over which neither he nor the Committee as a whole had any real control. Though there was little or no difficulty in regard to the religious question, he felt himself to be in a false position, and one the responsibilities of which he could not adequately fulfil.

Fairbairn's work for education was by no means confined to the schools, or to what has come to be known as the religious difficulty. He had always been an interested student of the English University system, and, when he was acclimatised in Oxford, he soon began to feel that he too had a concern in the anomalies and eccentricities of that ancient home of learning. The agitation for University Reform had not then assumed the importance that it has done in recent years, but a good many questions, that are now within the region of practical politics, were then beginning to be discussed in academic circles. Among them was that of the constitution of Convocation. On this subject Fairbairn wrote a long letter to the *Times* in March, 1905. He pointed out that Convocation was not only the final authority in all matters of University legislation, but that it also possessed the privilege of electing members of Parliament. It was therefore altogether to the interest of the University that Convocation should be as representative as possible, in order to help it to avoid the ruts into which academic bodies are only too prone to fall, and in order to give full expression to its will in the national legislature. He then pointed out that Convocation, as it stands, consists of a mere fraction of those who are qualified for membership on academic grounds, and he gave figures for a number of years past which fully bore out his contention. If all the men who were entitled to do so proceeded to the M.A. degree and kept their names on

the books of a college, the numbers of Convocation would be about five times greater than they are. The reason why so comparatively small a proportion of graduates qualify for Convocation is, Fairbairn proceeds to point out, simply the heavy cost of so doing, and the main object of his letter is to urge that this cost should be greatly reduced and put more on a level with that of the Scotch and younger English Universities. He is anxious that Convocation should be better fitted for its duties, and that it should retain the parliamentary franchise. He points out that "if the franchise be continued to the older Universities, its extension to the younger academic bodies becomes, as a constitutional and logical necessity, a mere question of time. But how will Parliament dare to make this extension in the face of such anomalies as exist in Convocation? and while extension would, in the circumstances, be impossible, the withdrawal of an invidious and unjustifiable distinction would not." From the facts, as he has stated them, Fairbairn draws two further deductions:

"First, Oxford must teach the men it forms that they have been formed for the service of their University as well as of the Church or State. The sense of filial obligation to the 'Alma Mater' ought to be a very sacred feeling involving absolute duties, especially in the form, not of sentimental rhapsodies over the beauties of Oxford, but of ethical obligation to its clamant needs. Secondly, the University ought to think more of its dignities and ideals than of its finances. Not that I would forget, or have the University forget, the necessity of means to life: but I would have it live by taxing its men less and inspiring them more. Would not the energies of the Universities and the colleges serve nobler purposes than they do even now, were they directed towards reducing the expenses of graduation and enrolment by two-thirds, and increasing by two-thirds the number of the men who keep their names on the roll of Convocation."

These proposals were widely commented on at the time and were generally well received. The London newspapers were especially cordial in welcoming them, though they doubted whether Oxford would be prepared to make the sacrifices required. The *Times*, for example, said :

" The financial risk would be considerable and might well deter those who best know the University, its conditions and its needs, from regarding the proposed change as either desirable or feasible in the circumstances. The reduction of the fees might have no such effects as Dr. Fairbairn anticipates from it—that is, it might not induce graduates to keep their names on the books in numbers sufficient to guarantee the University against ultimate loss. In any case the initial loss must be considerable, and many difficult questions would arise as to whether, and how far, the change should be retrospective. Nor is the future of University representation quite so secure, perhaps, as to make it altogether prudent to take it as the basis of a great financial experiment. It would, no doubt, be a good thing in itself to widen the basis of academical citizenship and to heighten its spirit. But so long as Convocation remains the final authority in matters of legislation, even this change might be regarded by some good friends of the University as of doubtful expediency. Universal suffrage does not always work well in political matters. Might it not sometimes produce rather strange results in educational matters ? These are some of the difficulties that occur to us in considering Dr. Fairbairn's very interesting suggestion. Possibly further discussion may remove them. In the meanwhile we cannot but bespeak for the suggestion a respectful, and even sympathetic, consideration by all to whom the welfare of Oxford is dear."

Oxford is proverbially slow to listen to any suggestions from outsiders as to matters affecting the internal life of the University. But, on this occasion, the *Times* probably represented the views of a large proportion of graduates. Nothing came of Fairbairn's proposals. They took their place among many other suggestions for the reform of Convocation, and no doubt helped to stimulate interest

in the question, an interest which has been kept alive till the present time. In his book on University Reform the present Chancellor, Lord Curzon of Kedleston, writes on the subject as follows :

" The conclusion to which I am led by an anxious study of the matter is that of the so-called reformers every one without exception is in favour of some amendment : that a number of persons not deeply interested in most of the subjects of internal academic reform yet feel keenly and even passionately upon this, a few having gone so far as to refuse me any help to the Oxford Re-endowment Fund so long as Convocation remains unreformed : and that of those who advocate the *status quo* the majority do so less from any belief that we have an ideal constitution than from a consciousness of the difficulties of the task of reform, and a knowledge that the assistance of Parliament may in all probability he required to solve them."[1]

At the time that Mansfield College was founded it had been suggested to Fairbairn by some of his friends that he should regularise the position of the college by seeking for it some kind of recognition from the University. This might take one of two forms, either by some University recognition of the college lecturers, or by giving the college the status of a Private Hall. In the year 1896 one of the lecturers of Mansfield, Dr. G. B. Gray, was appointed examiner in the Oriental School, and another, Mr. Thatcher, lectured for the Professor of Arabic, Dr. Margoliouth, during his temporary absence from Oxford. This led Fairbairn to frame proposals for having the staff of the college recognised as non-collegiate lecturers in Theology, and so obtaining a place for them on the Theological Faculty of the University. His suggestions were at first well received by the Censor of the Non-collegiate Delegacy, by the Vice-Chancellor and Senior Proctor, the Rector of Exeter, and other members of the Delegacy to whom they were sub-

[1] *Principles and Methods of University Reform*, p. 35.

mitted. In the course of the discussion which ensued difficulties arose which were felt to be insuperable. Fairbairn was informed that the Delegacy declined to take the matter up on the grounds (1) that the Board of Theology might refuse to accept the lectures, and so put the Delegacy in a very mortifying position, and (2) that the combined lecturers in Theology might withdraw from a combination which included the Mansfield staff. Fairbairn was very disappointed. Especially did he resent one argument which was used in his hearing, viz. that, as Mansfield had planted itself down in Oxford uninvited, it had no right to ask for recognition of any kind from the University. To this he always replied, that Mansfield had not come until the way had been opened for Nonconformists by the repeal of the Test Act. That having been done, Nonconformists had a perfect right in the University, and ought to be allowed to exercise their right in the Theological as in all other departments of its work. Nothing further was done in this direction during Fairbairn's lifetime, but it is gratifying to note that recent changes in the regulations of the Boards of Faculties have made it possible for the lectures of those members of the Mansfield staff who are otherwise qualified, to be recognised by the Faculty, and that the Board now accepts certain of the lectures given at Mansfield and places them on the University list.

As to the question of licensing the college as a Private Hall, Fairbairn quite rightly felt that the loss of independence which this would involve would outweigh any advantages to be gained by it. The whole question of the relation of the University to Private Halls was raised in the University magazine in the year 1900, and Fairbairn wrote in regard to it as follows :

" Your note on the new Private Halls raises an interesting question, which is to-day much riper for discussion than it was a few years ago, as to the policy which has brought certain new societies or colleges to Oxford.

I am glad to see how frankly you recognise the impossibility of forbidding 'serious students' to come here. It would indeed be a poor paradox to argue that what is good for the nation as a whole, or for any considerable section of it, is bad for the University. Oxford has ever been forward to confess that all classes and estates of the realm have a claim on her: and the new institutions are but so many opportunities by which she may affect classes that were long outside her pale and untouched by her influence. But your note does more than stir a question for academic discussion: it hints at alternative policies for dealing with the situation caused by the coming of the new institutions and the creation of private halls in their interest: and you incline to think that the best policy may be 'to adjust the present statute on Private Halls so as to make room for this new type.' Now I do not know what scheme may be in your mind, but I want to say, in the first place, that I deeply regret with you—though possibly for different reasons—the opening of these halls; for it but repeats in a more insidious and furtive form and on a more parochial scale, the old policy of establishing within the University colleges on a distinctively sectarian basis. And it seems to me an undignified as well as an unacademic proceeding, though here no doubt the ancient canon holds, *de gustibus non disputandum est.* But certainly of all academic inconveniences the most inconvenient would be the stealing of a permanent sect or society into recognition by the University under the name of a licensed master and in the guise of a private hall.

"Yet it is evident that as these private colleges, as we may call them, have come, and have come to stay, they have created or are creating a condition of things which the University must before long reckon with: and it would be well to bring to the reckoning not only statesmanship, but some generosity of mind and feeling. For what is the problem they offer for solution? May I be allowed frankly, and without laying myself open to the charge of personal or institutional egotism, to use Mansfield as a form under which the problem may be stated? Well, then, here is a society which has tried so to equip itself for its work as to be no reproach to the place where

it has made its home. The staff consists of seven men, four of them being men trained in Oxford, while most of them have, over and above what they have done in their respective Universities, given proof of erudition which the learned world has frankly recognised. The students are graduates who must pursue their special studies in theology for a minimum of three years, and they frequently stay for a fourth: and, though many of them have graduated elsewhere, no man is allowed to enter unless he becomes a member of the University. In the course of our brief history we can show a record of honours which would not disgrace colleges of longer history and greater name. To us as individuals the University has been most generous, and I am profoundly grateful for the courtesy and unmerited kindness it has shown to me personally. But the question which needs to be seriously considered is this: Ought an institution which is qualified and willing to do high academic work to be contented to remain outside the University system? Ought it to be satisfied to live and work without name or position for itself, or its staff, or its students, on the books of the University or in the class lists? These are grave questions which affect our dignity, but still more touch the honour of the University. One thing is obvious, that no statutory permission to register ourselves under any name or in any form or sense as a private hall would be regarded as agreeable to our claims or as consonant with our dignity. It would be better to remain for ever unacknowledged than to accept so unfit a recognition.

"This is hardly the place where an alternative policy could be outlined. But I may say that it seems to me as if within the University we may find a college which suggests a line that might here be followed. All Souls is organised for the study of a special subject, viz. Law. It endows professors and readers whose lectures are open to the University: and is, indeed, less a college in the strict sense than the seat of a faculty. And it has a function so pre-eminent and peculiar that, while there is no college whose loss would make Oxford more appreciably poorer, there is no one that so little fulfils the functions, or corresponds to the idea of the ordinary constituent college. And All Souls may supply a model

that might guide academical statesmanship in dealing with societies that are not so much colleges as faculties."

As time went on Fairbairn came to think somewhat differently on the question of recognition. It would always have serious drawbacks, and was not a thing to be grasped at. His relations with the University were throughout friendly and even cordial, and the independent position of the college made it possible to obtain many advantages without being hampered or restricted in any way.

A much more important question, and one which touched Fairbairn and his college very closely, was the condition of the Oxford School of Theology. In 1897 proposals were made for improving the school, and for bringing its regulations more in line with modern requirements. Fairbairn was consulted in regard to these changes, and the discussion of them went on for some time. In 1898, realising that the whole question of the Honour School of Theology and its relation to other studies in the University was being opened, Fairbairn wrote and published a letter to Canon Ince, the Regius Professor of Divinity, in which he set forth his views. The letter is too long, and enters too minutely into details, for publication, nor indeed can it be easily understood by those who are unfamiliar with the Oxford system. But it contains the best and most concise expression of Fairbairn's views on theology as an educational discipline, and some of its more general pronouncements are therefore worth recording. He begins by insisting, as he always did, that theology is essentially a post-graduate subject.

"Just because it is so rich in educative elements it needs a disciplined mind for its study. If it be turned into a School for the unqualified and unexercised, it must, unless most wisely organised and administered, become a flagrant example of the *corruptio optimi pessima*. Hence, were the institution of the School the question in discussion, all my reasoning would be in favour of

making it not a School qualifying for an Arts degree, but a later School limited to those who had already graduated and now wish to specialise."

This, however, he clearly understood was not practical politics. The School was there, and the problem was how to improve it and make it a more satisfactory discipline for an Arts degree. Fairbairn urges, as a preliminary consideration, that the School ought to be made thoroughly efficient and the equal of any other Honours School in the University. It had, at the time when he was writing, come to be regarded as a "soft option," almost as an alternative to a pass degree, and the proportion of first classes taken in it was altogether too small. How then could it be so organised as to make it a more worthy and useful academic discipline? To secure this end, Fairbairn advises that the regulations for the School should be so framed as to secure that every candidate shall obtain "(1) a general knowledge of the field in which he has to work, what it comprehends, what it excludes, and in what relation its several parts stand to each other; (2) such a knowledge of certain selected parts or sections as will give him a better notion of the whole field, and supply him at once with a method for future research, and a standard by which to judge its results; and (3) some idea of the tools he has to handle, and some exercise or discipline in the art of handling them."

In order to secure this result, Fairbairn recommended that, in the study of the Scriptures, a knowledge of Hebrew should be required as well as of Greek; that all candidates should be expected to show a general acquaintance with the history of dogma, as well as more special knowledge of some particular doctrine or period; and that the same general and special knowledge should be required in Church history. He also urged that all candidates should be expected to study Christian apologetics. In addition to this, special subjects might be allowed for specially equipped candidates, but it is interesting to learn that he

did not propose to include Comparative Religion as one of them. He wrote :

" Experience has convinced me of its complete unsuitability for the purposes of the School. It is too large and vague a subject : first-hand knowledge cannot be acquired, accuracy cannot be secured, and good text-books are not available."

On the general scope of his proposals he writes :

" The scheme which has here been presented in outline seems to me a really practicable and possible scheme, especially when we remember that it is proposed for an Honours School of Theology. It recognises as necessary to the equipment of the theologian knowledge (1) of the sacred tongues, (2) of the sacred books, (3) of their distinctive ideas or truths as they have been formulated by the Church, (4) of the life of the Church, especially in certain great creative moments of its history, and (5) of the mode in which the Church can vindicate its beliefs in the face of the denial, or the criticism, of a given day. It would hardly be possible to ask less of a man who wants the University to give him a place on her register of honours and distinctions. And I believe that, though the immediate result would be a decline in the number of candidates—and we ought to remember that a decline may in certain circumstances be more of a good than an evil—yet the ultimate result would be a real and a permanent increase."

Fairbairn claimed that there was nothing Utopian about this scheme, but he did not altogether allow for the limitations of the average candidate for the Theological School. At the time it would not have been possible to introduce such regulations as he suggested, without shutting out the majority of those who took the School from any hope of obtaining honours. Since he wrote, the School has been improved in some respects, but it is still very far short of his ideal, and so long as it remains a School for graduation can hardly be expected to be otherwise.

## CHAPTER IX

### LIFE AND WORK AT OXFORD
### 1890–1895

With the opening of the new buildings at Mansfield Fairbairn settled down to work in Oxford. Of his theological and literary activity during these years we have already spoken. But this filled only a comparatively small part of his time. Whatever else he might be doing, his first interest was always the college. He lectured five or six times a week, and was seldom absent from his place. He preached frequently in the chapel, and, when not preaching himself, remained at home in order to entertain the distinguished men who occupied the pulpit. Very soon after his settlement in Oxford he had been elected a member of the senior common room at Exeter College, and he liked to take his guests to dine at the High Table on Sunday evenings. Always hospitably inclined, he made his house a home for the younger Nonconformists in the University, and during term time it was seldom without its complement of visitors, among whom Scotchmen and Americans often seemed to predominate. In the work of entertaining he was admirably seconded by his wife and daughters. For himself he loved to be surrounded by his friends, and even in his busiest days would find time to join them and, whatever the company, to be the youngest and merriest among them. He had a great fund of Scotch stories which he never seemed to exhaust, and no subject was outside the range of his conversational powers. His memory was extraordinary. Any chance remark would call up some train of association, and away he would go after it,

leaving his companions breathless. He was a great reader of novels, and he remembered them all. Indeed he used sometimes to say that it was a pity his memory had not been provided with the usual sieve, for it left with him a great deal that might very well have been forgotten.

Of his home life in the early days at Oxford the Rev. T. H. Martin, of Crosby, writes :

" In his fine house on the Banbury Road he soon drew round him a happy circle of men and friends. I remember his keen amusement when one afternoon I saw John Stuart Blackie come over the garden wall from a neighbouring house, and, entering without announcement through the French window in the drawing-room, leap forward and kneeling down kiss Mrs. Fairbairn's hands after the manner of an old Scotch cavalier chieftain.

" Nor was the Doctor so preoccupied that he could not be induced to join our frequent picnics on the upper river. How he enjoyed them, and tried to tell his stories while he laboured with a disregarding oar ! Sometimes we had with us Mr. Harley, the minister of George Street Church, an F.R.S. and a great teller of stories, and then the fun was fast and furious. Happy days they were, and the Doctor and Mrs. Fairbairn and their family came close into the lives of the men. Their home circle, and all that was gathered in it of unbroken affection and charm, was to some of us not the least of the influences Mansfield exerted upon us ; and the thought of the Doctor which remains with one now is of him in his home circle, sitting at the table or by the fireside, recounting some former experiences or telling with unconcealed enjoyment an amusing story. They never knew Dr. Fairbairn who did not know him in his own home circle, and it is good to know that the last three years or more of his life were spent in the happy seclusion of his own family, his public engagements over, his engrossing study laid aside, and all that he was as husband and father and friend free to assert itself. This sense of comradeship marked all his dealings with his men. Into all the great experiences or crises that befell them, whether joyous or sorrowful, the Doctor entered with sympathy and counsel,

and many of us will always remember certain occasions when the real humanity of him was manifested in wonderfully gracious and beautiful ways. Our marriage, our first-born, our chiefest sorrows are all associated with him, and in these ways he became an integral part of our life ; and if, in his later years at Mansfield, his men did not know him in quite the same way as they did in earlier years, that was inevitable as time lessened his strength, and scattered the circle that had gathered in the home. To us Mansfield will always be associated with the Doctor. We shall see him coming down the steps from his house, in cap and gown, with eyes fixed upon the ground, going across to lecture, or to the service in the Chapel. We shall see him sitting there in the stalls, and hear him giving out the hymns in that never-to-be-forgotten voice ; and I shall think of him as I last saw him, standing there, looking up with conscious pride and delight at the new windows in course of erection, the subjects of which he had chosen, and which represent his conception of the true Catholic Church, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, which he himself has now joined."

He was delighted with the immediate and almost unexpected success of the college. After the first few years the financial burden grew comparatively light, thanks largely to the zeal and energy of his friend, Sir Albert Spicer, the College Treasurer, and he was able to give himself to the work of teaching and administration without anxiety on that score. He had round him an increasing and enthusiastic band of students, and younger colleagues whom he had trained himself. He had, too, the help of many of the University professors and lecturers where it was needed. He loved his students, and they loved him in return. In these years he was very accessible to them. One would go into his study and he would turn from the great desk loaded with papers, and whatever the question asked, personal or theological, would at once give it his undivided attention. Striding about the room or standing with his back to the fire, with one hand in his pocket and the other

nervously plucking at his beard, with a strange glow in his deep-set eyes, he would pour forth advice, argument, admonition or comfort as it might be needed. He took a deep interest in, and spent infinite pains over, the work of finding suitable spheres for his men on leaving college. Indeed it was sometimes thought that he did too much of this himself, and left but little choice in the matter to others. He would correspond with churches, and men would find themselves committed to certain arrangements without their knowledge or consent. It was all part of his masterful way. He liked to get things done, and he was pretty sure that he knew best how to do them. Needless to say he made some mistakes, but he was the first to acknowledge them and repent of them when made. Nor did he lose touch with his students once they had left college and settled down to the work of their lives. He followed their career with watchful interest, and was always ready with help and counsel. At the annual reunions at the college he was at his best and happiest. He welcomed the old men back again as to a home, and in his speech to them after dinner was always tender, reminiscent, admonitory, and full of cheer. He was to them "the Doctor" par excellence: the teacher at whose feet they never ceased to sit: but at the same time the sanest and most gracious of friends.

He was inordinately proud of the college. It is no exaggeration to say that he gave to it the best portion of his life. It represented the goal of his most cherished ambitions, and was to him a real achievement, part of his very self. As the years went on he spent immense pains in perfecting its equipment and in laying plans for its future. Every stone of it was dear to him, and on every detail of its adornment he had spent of his time and thought. When the time came for him to retire from the Principalship, the wrench was made less bitter by the thought that he had just completed the scheme for stained-glass windows in the chapel, and that nothing

was now wanting to make the building what he wished it to be. It was through his personal influence and importunity that much of the money for the development and endowment of its work was obtained.

In the early part of the year 1890 Mr. Gladstone paid a visit to Oxford in order to prepare the articles which were afterwards published as "The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." At the same time he was persuaded to give a lecture at the Union on Homer and Assyriological Discovery. During his visit he expressed a wish to see Mansfield College, and Fairbairn invited a number of his friends to meet him at dinner in the College Hall. The old man was full of interest in the work of the college and in Fairbairn's hopes and plans. During dinner, however, the talk fell on hymnology—Nonconformist and Anglican. The subject was one which interested both men and on which they both had a unique knowledge. The topic absorbed them to the exclusion of everything in a quite characteristic fashion.

It was during the same year that Fairbairn began to mature a plan that he had long entertained for finding some point of contact between Mansfield College and the East End of London. In Oxford at that time the ideals of Arnold Toynbee and Samuel Barnett were very influential. Toynbee Hall had been founded, and was leading the way to many similar enterprises for bringing culture and religion to bear on the dim life of the masses in the East End. In this work Fairbairn believed that the Nonconformist churches had a real part to play. But he was the last man to take the matter up simply from the sectarian point of view. With him it was always a religious impulse that was dominant in such concerns. He was anxious too to find some practical outlet for the social sympathies of his students, being convinced that knowledge as well as enthusiasm, would be necessary if ever they were to lead out the churches into wider fields of social service. For some time past

he had been in the habit of sending students of the college to visit the Rev. F. W. Newland, then Congregational minister in Canning Town.[1] Mr. Newland was an old Oxford man who had been greatly influenced by the Toynbee Hall spirit, and who had dedicated his life to the service of the poor. In Canning Town he was doing a remarkable work on religious, as well as on social, lines. In one or two visits which he paid to Oxford he succeeded in rousing not a little interest both in his work and in his methods. It was therefore quite natural that Fairbairn's eyes, and those of some of the students who were especially devoted to social ideals, should turn to Newland and to Canning Town as offering the most promising field for their hopes and aims. The place itself provided what might be called virgin soil for settlement work. In the outer ring of London, beyond the river Lea, it forms a vast district inhabited largely by dockers and other casual labourers. It was among these that the Mansfield House University Settlement was started. It was at first closely associated with Mr. Newland's work, he being its Honorary Warden, and Mr. Percy Alden, Warden. Mr. Newland wrote of it :

" I believe that there is no part of East London where the need and the facilities for such service as Mansfield House can render are greater than in the Canning Town and Victoria Dock district. We have a large population of skilled mechanics and thoughtful artisans, eagerly desirous of self-improvement and needing guidance in social and intellectual development : we have a still larger section of unskilled workmen, dock labourers and others, requiring to be stimulated to higher and nobler living, while at the same time there is a considerable residuum of the population needing to be raised from intemperance and other degrading vices. While the scope for many-sided work, both among the aristocracy of labour and humbler workers, is vast and increasing,

[1] Now Superintendent of the Claremont Mission of the London Congregational Union.

all existing agencies of the kind contemplated are at a great distance and practically without influence in the district."

The New Settlement was begun in September, 1890. Fairbairn became its first President and continued to hold the office till his death. He was always deeply interested in the work, and regarded the house in Canning Town as almost an integral part of the college, or at least as its most valuable adjunct. He spoke in its support at meetings held in Oxford and London, and he used frequently to visit the Settlement, and revived there his Bradford experiences by discussing religious questions with the working men. Some years later when the Settlement was criticised in the religious press for emphasising too strongly the social and cultural aspect of its work, he wrote vigorously in its defence to one of the papers:

"Let me thank you for the well-meant kindness of your 'note' on Mansfield House. But you know it is not easy to satisfy those who deeply love and strongly believe in an institution: and to me your praise seems more discriminative and so more just than your blame. Your critic knew too little. He could not have been present at all our services or read any adequate report of them, or he would not have written as he did. In the later and larger service, the religious bases and functions of the house were emphasised in a way that would have satisfied the most godly jealousy. And anyone who knows the house and its working must know that there is not, in the whole of London, an institution of its kind less imitative, or more independent in its methods, or more successful in its results. This is not simply our own indulgent judgment of ourselves: it is that of both Continental and American visitors who have inspected and reported on the University Settlements of our metropolis. And it is characteristic that the most emphatic testimony to the exceptional success of Mansfield House, as an agency for religious and social amelioration, comes from the most evangelical tendency

within the Congregational churches of America. I do not write this willingly, for there is nothing I more dislike to do than to magnify our work. It is quite able to speak for itself, and anyone who looks upon it with his own eyes will do much better than if he looks at it through yours or ours. But this I will say; I have the same sort of gratitude to the men who work or have worked there, of admiration for them and jealousy for their reputation, that I have for the pioneers of foreign missions or of religious freedom. This is what has tempted me to write to you."

Of Fairbairn's work in connection with the Settlement Mr. Percy Alden, M.P., writes:

"Although I had known Dr. Fairbairn for two years before going down to live in East London, it was not until I left Oxford to inaugurate the work of Mansfield House that I really came to understand how great a man he was. In the long and intimate conversations which we had on the subject of the work which became so dear to his heart, I learned to appreciate to the full his sympathetic and understanding mind. Other men may praise his scholastic attainments, his great mental powers—and in truth he was one of the intellectual giants of his time—but to me he will always remain the friend who tried to enter into the sufferings and the joys of the poor, who, sprung from the people, understood the people, and felt that no encouragement was too great to give to the man who would be willing to go to the assistance of those whom he loved. I remember so well my chat with him after the lunch at which the Settlement was started; the simple faith and confidence of the man who believed in his fellow-men and who knew that if they were put on their honour to do their best they would not betray those who trusted them. 'A great responsibility is thrust upon you,' he said, 'and a very arduous piece of work is given you to perform, but we have no doubt about you, and we are sure that if it is possible to succeed you will achieve success.' He was so generous in his confidence that we all felt that he must not be disappointed, and certain it is that he never disappointed us.

It is never possible to set on foot a piece of work which is to grow year by year and touch many sides of life without subjecting yourself to criticism, and in the earlier days many things that I said at public meetings, and especially gatherings of working men, were open to misconstruction. Misrepresentations of the utterances both of my colleague Reason and myself were very frequent, and letters and remonstrances were addressed to Dr. Fairbairn for sanctioning and supporting a Settlement that was run on such lines. Fairbairn would show me the letters and say, 'I don't want any explanation; I have written to say that I have every confidence in the men who are doing the work, and that people who criticise should remember the difficulties that you have to encounter. Only those are entitled to criticise who are prepared to take their share of the work.' No big change was ever made at Mansfield House without consulting 'the Doctor,' not that he was always able to give any practical advice, although he was a most shrewd and capable counsellor, but the fact that he knew and understood and cared about anything that you were doing was an inspiration in itself, and so every fresh venture had the hall-mark of his approval, although he never asked to be consulted.

"The question that most naturally arises is how far was Dr. Fairbairn responsible for the inception of Mansfield House; was the social enthusiasm due to him and to his work; did he create the desire for this practical application of Christian teaching to the social problems of the day? It is doubtless true that he found this enthusiasm already in existence, for Arnold Toynbee was still a name to conjure with, and Thomas Hill Green was a revered and loved memory both in the city and in the University. But at the same time we probably should not have realised our ambitions in respect of the Settlement, had it not been for the encouragement which Dr. Fairbairn gave to the project from the very outset. His sympathies were rather more with what might be called the philanthropic and charitable side of the Settlement's activities than with the public work on local authorities. But one thing is quite certain that he never wavered in his support when once a decision had been

taken, and year by year his belief was strengthened, as a result of the operations of the Settlement, that charity itself, however carefully thought out and bestowed, was not sufficient, and that much constructive work would have to be done before the worst forms of poverty and vice had been eliminated from East London.

"One saw Fairbairn at his very best when he came down to visit us. His familiar and frank talks in the Common Room, his intense interest in every new development, and in all the conditions that made up the life of the poor in that district, show the greatness of the man. He would hold an audience of working men spellbound by the scope and breadth of his learning. They regarded him as a sort of walking encyclopædia. His speeches, erudite and sympathetic, delivered without notes, appealed very much to the working men of Canning Town, who were no mean judges of either oratory or learning. They may not have agreed with him so far as his economic position was concerned, for he sometimes felt that we were moving too rapidly in the direction of State interference, and he was doubtful about the wisdom of new experiments in legislation. He would, however, have approved of the Trade Boards Act and the principle of a minimum wage, even though he sympathised with the employer who thought it might mean ruin to his trade. In his view those who did the hard manual labour of the world must be given such a sufficiency of necessaries of life and such bodily comforts as would enable them to discharge their duty completely and fully as citizens. 'These social, political, and moral questions,' he said, 'must be seen from the standpoint of the worker. There were men in the present day who could only look at things from the point of view of an obsolete political economy.' The day for *laissez-faire* economics was past, and the time had come when men must no longer be counters in the game, but living human beings with rights that ought to be granted and desires that must be satisfied. 'Justice will be done,' he said, 'for although the English people are hard to move, when they are persuaded that a certain thing is right to do they do it.' He never ceased to exhort the churches to take a deeper and wider interest in the social welfare of the people, and on many occasions he argued

that what was wanted was more of the spirit of service in the Church and less of that worldly materialistic atmosphere in which churches were apt to stagnate. 'Whatever concerned the weal of man,' I remember his saying in Mansfield Hall, 'was essentially religious'; and he asked us to remember that the one thing we could do was to fill life with good materially as well as morally, and that a life so lived would not be lived in vain. He regarded the Church as the place where the right kind of men should be made. 'It was not a Parliament, it was not a Municipal Council, but it was or ought to be a great institution for making the right kind of men to be returned to Parliament or County Councils, an institution which would have the country's weal at heart and the country's good in view.' The reproach brought against the Churches in the past was that they thought only of the next world, and he was prepared to admit that there was a certain amount of truth in this charge. 'Yet if a man has eternity in his heart is he any the worse to deal with the affairs of this world?' On several occasions Fairbairn spoke in Canning Town on the importance of making the home pure and good. He contended that, however desirable it might be to preach to the poor who were living in squalid slums and in mean streets, there might be even a prior duty, viz. that of giving them decent cottages and better housing accommodation. How was the home to be made pure? Better houses were an absolute necessity, so was better drainage, better lighting, purer water, and purer air. All these things were needed, and then he added—and this after all was the note which he struck in every speech—but how are you to obtain them unless you send better men to serve on your public bodies and in Parliament? I have emphasised this point because it was often thought that Dr. Fairbairn had little or no sympathy with the inner work of the Settlement. He had a very firm belief in its importance, although as I have already stated he was at first a little doubtful about the advisability of all Settlement workers embarking upon it. He never hesitated, however, to affirm the close connection between the physical and the spiritual; the burden of his utterance was, if you want men to be good and honourable citizens you must treat

them well, pay them well, feed, clothe, and house them as if they were human beings and not brute beasts. On this side he got the hearing even of the extreme Socialists, and he often had to answer the questions which they put to him. He knew that he could not satisfy them on the economic side, but he had a big heart overflowing with sympathy for all who were in distress or trouble, and he made it evident to them and to many others that he would be no stickler for a rigid and orthodox maintenance of an economic creed which did not offer a pathway of escape outwards and upwards to the toiling people of the East End."

The following paragraph from the *British Weekly* of June 13, 1890, very fitly characterises the beginning of Fairbairn's work in Oxford:

"Mansfield College is now fairly started on its hopeful career. It is not too much to say that the great experiment has magnificently justified itself. Dr. Fairbairn must be weary of exhibiting and being exhibited: but he must be patient yet awhile, as fellow mortals marvel at one of the rarest adjustments in the world of the round man to the round hole. Such refreshment we need sometimes to keep faith alive. Dr. Fairbairn is a man who needed to have his place made for him, and the thing has been done. Of the intellectual power and the opulence of knowledge he has brought to the work it would be impertinent to speak. To the large and hopeful catholicity and the unswerving fidelity to Nonconformist principles with which the work is carried on, every week bears fresh witness. The band of men who have gathered round the Principal as students bring large contributions in point of scholarship to the Church of the future: and their studies have not dulled their sympathy with the burden and weight of the world. They propose to institute a University Settlement in Canning Town to be called Mansfield House, and have already made a very hopeful start, enlisting the sympathies of such men as Prof. Bryce, Dr. Clifford, Mr. T. Raleigh,[1] and others, in addition to names familiar as those of leaders in the work of the Congregational churches."

[1] Now Sir Thomas Raleigh.

In 1891 Fairbairn attended the meetings of the first International Congregational Council held in London, reference to which has already been made.[1] In the same year he wrote an article in the *Speaker* on the Centenary of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and one in the *Critical Review* on Cardinal Newman. About this time also he was occupied, along with Mr. Percy Bunting and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, in arranging meetings of Free Church leaders in order to ventilate the idea of a Free Church Congress. It was out of these meetings that the Free Church Council took its rise some few years later. Fairbairn tried to interest Dale in the movement, but without very much success. He was himself very sanguine about the possibilities of federation and co-operation in practical work. Dale, on the other hand, greatly feared lest such co-operation should tend to absorb the churches unduly in other than purely religious work, and should make them, even in spite of themselves, become too much in the nature of political and social institutions.[2]

In the spring of the following year, 1892, Fairbairn again visited America on a lecturing tour. He was accompanied by Mr. A. W. W. Dale[3] and the late Rev. Richard Alliott, Headmaster of the Bishops Stortford College. Sir Alfred Dale writes :

" Just before he went, he and Mrs. Fairbairn were staying with us. He was not well, and Mrs. Fairbairn was anxious that he should not go alone. The whole thing was settled in a few minutes. I went with him, looked after him there, saw that his hat and coat were properly brushed whenever he appeared in public, and that no one spoke to him for an hour before he lectured or preached. On the way out Sir William Forwood and four or five of his friends were at the same table. They were amazed and amused by Fairbairn's encyclopædic knowledge, and an organised attempt, with bets all round, was made to find a subject on which he had no informa-

[1] P. 153. [2] Cf. *Life of Dr. Dale*, by his Son, p. 647 foll.
[3] Now Sir Alfred Dale, Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University.

tion to give. I need hardly say that the attempt proved a failure."

He lectured at Union Seminary, at Columbia, and at Yale, and some account of his experiences will be found in the letters at the close of this chapter. In this year too he was appointed Gifford Lecturer in Aberdeen, and began there a series of lectures on the religions of the world, which he delivered at intervals during the next three years. He greatly enjoyed revisiting Aberdeen, where he had hosts of friends and met with a warm welcome. On one of the first Sundays of the lectureship he preached before the University in King's College Chapel, and wrote the following account of the function to his wife :

" To-day has been as busy as any week-day. I went out to the 'Varsity Church, if so we may call King's College Chapel, and preached. There was a great crowd, the biggest, they said, within memory ; a host of professors, making a procession which St. Mary's could not have surpassed. Students were in red gowns, professors in hoods and all their bravery, lots of old Aberdeen friends filling the aisles, while the professorial ladies occupied the stalls at one end and the professorial husbands occupied stalls at the other. It was a magnificent congregation, and I did my best to preach up to it—possibly not without success. The text was 1 Corinthians i. 22–24. The sermon[1] one of those about to appear, at which I am sorry now, as I should have preferred it to have been made for the occasion. The words to the young men at the end touched many, it seems. I dined or lunched with Prof. Stewart, a very good and excellent fellow, who used to attend St. Paul's Street. Another professor, Kennedy, turns out to have done the same. It is quite touching to find out how many had been moved by the words of old days. I am doubtful, when I see the results, if ever I did as much good anywhere as here in Aberdeen. Those days were days of labour which was not in vain."

[1] Published in *Christ in the Centuries*, 1893.

The Gifford Lectures covered the whole ground of comparative religion, and were intended to form the substance of Fairbairn's long-projected work on that subject. Of their genesis and scope he gives the following account :

" Their general purpose might be described thus : to vindicate what may be termed the theistic constitution of man and of his universe, and to discover or determine how far that constitution has been expressed and unfolded in history. His religions are here regarded as the immediate products of the nature within, acting on and affected by the nature without, both physical and human. Their general principle may simply be stated as follows : the religions that have everywhere been evolved reflect a nature that involves the religion or the Deity they express. But in looking back over the course, I feel how little the original scheme, though it may have been sketched in outline, has been worked out in detail. I deeply and keenly regret that, especially as regards this last course, I have been obliged to confine myself to statements of general results without dealing with the special investigations on which these results have been based. It was only after long and anxious consideration that this method was followed, and after seeking the best and wisest advice that was available : but I feel that it would have been very much more intellectual satisfaction to myself had I taken one single religion and worked out its history in more complete detail. But for the purposes of the Gifford Lectureship it might have been more excellent to supply my hearers, after the discussion of philosophical principles, with the general sketch of certain illustrative types of religions and the forms they have assumed. Perhaps in Aberdeen I may be allowed to say, that it is more than thirty years since the dream that has been struggling into imperfect expression first took shape. In a quiet and yet loved and lonely manse I was studying at one and the same time two most dissimilar books—the *De Verbi Incarnatione* of Athanasius, and the *Intellectual System of the Universe* of Cudworth—and this thought came to me, that the passion after a fit expression for God of this Christian father, and the quest

of these so-called heathen philosophers, had been one and the same : they at the root had sought the same God and attempted to express what they had found, and out of this grew the desire to make man's quest after Deity the key to all his religions and the secret of the aspirations in his history."

At the close of these lectures Fairbairn intimated that he hoped before very long to publish them. This was never done, but the reason was not, as generally alleged, that he failed to find time to put them into shape. While the lectures were being delivered, those relating to the Chinese religions were criticised as not being up-to-date. Fairbairn had largely followed the guidance of his friend Dr. Legge, who was undoubtedly an authority of the first rank. But his work was gradually being superseded by that of younger scholars, and it was necessary to revise many of his conclusions. When Fairbairn discovered this, he knew that he could not publish the lectures without rewriting all of them that referred to China. Great as his disappointment was, he did not hesitate to stop the work at once, though he must have known that it was extremely improbable that he would ever have the opportunity of doing what he wished. That proved to be the case; but it is altogether to his credit that he declined to be responsible for work which he knew would be imperfect and not thoroughly fresh in its presentation of the facts.

At this time he was more than ever occupied with various public and preaching engagements. Hardly a month passed without his being called upon to preach special sermons at some function connected with the Free Churches. Such sermons were generally of the nature of great theological deliverances, which were eagerly listened to by large audiences and were very widely reported. In June of 1892 he visited the Primitive Methodist Conference in connection with the appointment of his colleague Mr. A. S. Peake to a theological professor-

ship in the college of this denomination. He delivered a very characteristic address on the education of the Christian ministry. He pleaded with all his accustomed warmth for a higher standard of training, and urged upon the churches the duty of seeking out and setting apart the best men for the work of this high vocation. He said :

" Tell me the home out of which a man comes and I will tell you what can be done with him. I am a man who has studied under many masters living and dead, and I have learned from them all. But my first master was my greatest. From my mother there came everything that ever went to make any man of me that is. When she got her second boy she said, ' This is to be a man for God.' She reared him as one she had consecrated, surrounded him with influences that told what her hope was ; and as I bore the name that ministers in the family had borne for generations, I was to be the minister of the family. Out of the home came the influences that shape the boy, and the boy is father of the man. But the mother of the boy determines the character and quality of his spirit. Let me appeal to mothers. I speak often to fathers, and I have many a hard thing sometimes to say to them. But let me say to those who shape the earliest spirit, it is in the home that the foundation of character is laid, and never can you make the superstructure strong unless it be built upon rock. Not only the mother, but the Church must watch the boy. Many a time a college is asked, ' Why don't you send out better preachers ? ' I have always one question in answer, for I am still a Scotchman, and a Scotchman always answers one question by asking another. Whenever I am asked about sending out better preachers the invariable question is, ' Why don't you send in better men ? ' We give what we get, and in giving what we get it depends on the Church what manner of men they are. It is when the right material comes into the right college that the best results may be expected."

In the same year Fairbairn attended the jubilee of the Assembly of the Free Churches of Scotland as a delegate from the English Congregational Union. He spoke of the

great debt he personally owed to the Free Church, and to the men who had embodied its spirit. The name they bore was the noblest that could be attached to any church. It stood not for freedom from any burden or duty, but only for freedom from external control that they might thereby the better fulfil their responsibilities. He spoke of the great work they had done for theological education, and told them how their college had always been the model he had held up before himself in his attempt to found a college further south. He spoke of their great teachers Chalmers and Cunningham, Smeaton and Buchanan, and appealed to them to maintain the traditions of these men and incarnate their spirit afresh in themselves and their sons. It was the kind of occasion that Fairbairn loved. He was never so happy as when dealing with the religious history of Scotland. He had an intimate knowledge of its intricacies and of the men who had made it, and he loved to be called upon to do them honour.

In the spring of 1893 Fairbairn paid a short visit to Berlin in company with his friend Mr. Henry Spicer, of London. Each had a special object in view—Fairbairn's being to see Prof. Harnack and possibly persuade him to come and lecture in Oxford, and Mr. Spicer's to study the Egyptian remains in the Berlin museum. They had a great hunt for Harnack, who was living in a new house in a new suburb, very difficult of access.

"He was agreeable, as he always is, and we talked over many things. He evidently did not like Ramsay's book—was hard on it for its attitude to German scholars, praised its topography, but condemned its history. He surrendered Pfleiderer to his tender mercies, but did not like all German theologians to be judged by him."

As to the object of his visit, that, he says, "ended in an illusion." All the same, he enjoyed his holiday, taking as much interest in the museums as Mr. Spicer, who was a keen student of Egyptology, and giving himself to sight-

seeing with the energy of a boy. He visited Mommsen and Kaftan—"a very shy and retiring man, not very strong, but he interested us greatly." He was much concerned to find that he was less at home in German than he had been :

"My great disappointment is to find my German clean gone : my command of common words and familiar idioms and expressions is nil : and only in technical words in theology have I any familiarity. It is humiliating, especially as when over in '84 I made a fairly decent appearance. Since then I have become far rustier than in the previous ten years. I suppose the older one gets the stiffer in mind—mental joints won't move."

Of one of his Sunday experiences he writes :

"This morning we went to hear the great preacher in Berlin, Dr. Dryander, in Schleiermacher's old church. It was a splendid congregation. The ordinary seat-holders fill the church, and no strangers are allowed to enter till all seat-holders are satisfied. But fortune favoured the brave. We went into a pew right opposite the pulpit, took our places in the centre opposite two names Sachs and Portzig. I asked if they were likely to be in the church, and an old man answered me that we had been singularly fortunate, that Frau Portzig was very ill and her husband not likely to be able to come. However, he came, took up one of the seats, made me welcome to the other, and assured me that the Sachs, whose seat Mr. Spicer occupied, would not be present. The church was crowded, every pew, every inch of standing ground occupied, and the whole as attentive and devout as congregation could be. The service was good, the music excellent. In the hymns the whole congregation took part, and a more impressive or devout spirit could not have filled the place. The sermon was on John x. 22–29. It lasted for an hour and held the people throughout."

In the summer of 1893 Fairbairn attended the celebrations in connection with the jubilee of Lancashire

Independent College in Manchester. He gave an address which he describes to his wife as "one of the most successful I ever delivered." It dealt with the ministry and its training, and enforced with all the power that his added experience had given him his old plea for high ideals in these things.

In the autumn of the same year Fairbairn was again in Aberdeen delivering the Gifford Lectures. During his visit his old friend Dr. Milligan died, and he was invited by the University court to preach the funeral sermon in King's Chapel.

Early in this year he celebrated his silver wedding. Writing to Dr. Dale he said :

"Our silver wedding was indeed a season of grateful recollection and thanksgiving. We have travelled together through these years without a shadow, and though the way has often been hard and rough, we have never ceased to feel in each other the potency of a higher Presence. And so 'hitherto the Lord hath helped us.'"

In March, 1893, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology* was published. It was dedicated to Mrs. Fairbairn in the following terms : "This book is dedicated to my wife, whose quiet helpfulness and fair companionship have made the twenty-five years of our wedded life years of happy labour and gracious peace." The book passed through five editions before the year reached its close. Fairbairn was greatly pleased with its favourable reception, and made plans for giving yet more time to literary work. He was especially anxious to get the Gifford Lectures out of the way, and then devote himself to the Philosophy of Religion. But engagements of another kind multiplied, as we shall see, and the work was postponed, and in the end was only partially completed.

In this year too his old teacher Dr. Morison died, and Fairbairn wrote the following letter to his widow :

"OXFORD,

"MY DEAR MRS. MORISON, "*November* 14, 1893.

"So the loved and revered master is no more! He had indeed served his generation, and surely the will of God has graciously 'given His beloved sleep.' His has been a long and tiresome, yet most fruitful day; and though he suffered, yet it has been as the victor suffers. Not to him, indeed, in any outward sense was the spoil, but to all the churches and to the wide realm of thought. He made all communions his debtors by teaching all to think more fitly of the character and ways of God.

"I did not know him in the early days of his warfare and his strength. He had been forced to cease his work and seek rest and change in travel, and my first year in the old Academy was the year of his return home. He ought then to have been in the very fullness of manhood and vigour; but the early labour had overtaxed his energies, and he had to struggle against a physical weakness that made teaching a peculiar burden. And so he remained all through my student days. But all the more on this account he was impressive and effective as a teacher. He was a type of intellectual and moral heroism. In spite of what he suffered he never spared himself; nothing in our poor work escaped him, no error was too minute for correction, no awkwardness so unimportant as to be overlooked. He was most impatient with the presumption and stupidity of ignorance, but wonderfully patient with the humility that wanted to learn. And he stood before us the very ideal of high scholarship and rigorous accuracy, stooping to correct our worse than schoolboy mistakes. To see him and to come thus under his influence was to all of us a truly liberal education.

"Another side turned out to us as young ministers. He became the friend and brother without ceasing to be the father and guide. He was interested in all our work and all our studies. My first charge had been his father's, and my first manse the house in which he was born. He loved Bathgate, and many of the old people had been friends of his father's, and he loved to keep up the old affections and associations. This gave us an additional

ground of common interest and sympathy, and was the occasion of revealing a fine and simple human-heartedness that was not always or easily seen. But it was the common need of the young servant for the help and correction and inspiration of the older that most in those years drew us together, and my obligations are here indeed of a kind that must always be remembered with gratitude. In the Academy we used to feel his high-toned sincerity; but as ministers we learned to know and love his simple and kindly gentleness and rare intellectual humility.

"How those old days of struggle, helped and brightened so much by love and admiration for him, come back to me as I write! But, alas! we shall see the master no more. He rests from his labours, and our love follows him. 'Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord'; yea, and 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.'

"Sincerely yours,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

In 1894 the Gifford Lectures were brought to an end. But in the same year new and arduous duties came to take their place. At the instance of Dr. Dale, Fairbairn was appointed to the Royal Commission on Secondary Education. He was very reluctant to undertake such a task, and wrote to Dale:

"I feel the responsibility of refusing, but also the seriousness of accepting. It is not the sort of work I want to put my hand to. My way to increased literary activity was becoming tolerably clear. I want to begin the *Philosophy of Religion*, and this will indefinitely postpone my work. But no considerations of personal convenience will weigh with me if my going on this Commission is needful for the good of our people and their interest in the schools. I know you will be quite frank with me, and not urge me to accept, if you can see good reasons for my staying out."

Fairbairn was always aware of the fact that he was not an ideal committee man. He worked much better

by himself and in his own way, and was apt to be impatient with slower minds than his own. It says not a little for his public spirit that he should so frequently have sacrificed time, which he knew could be spent better, in work of this kind. Of the Commission and what he did on it we have already spoken in connection with his other educational work. At this particular juncture he was moved to give himself to service of this kind by the fact that Dr. Dale was gradually being compelled to retire from all public activity. Fairbairn felt himself obliged, in loyalty to his friend, to do what he could to further those causes with which Dale had been for long so closely identified. Among the many things which Dale resigned at this time, the Chairmanship of Council of Mansfield College was one, and Fairbairn felt the loss keenly. "Your name," he wrote, "has often been to me a strength in time of trouble, and in the administration of Mansfield the thought of you has often acted like a conscience." The following letter, written to Dale on the publication of his book *Christian Doctrine* in October, 1894, shows something of his feeling for him:

"Your book has come and I hasten to thank you for it, even though time has allowed me to do no more than cut it open and dip into its pages. Yet it has made me hear your voice, speaking as ever its own most assured and hopeful and victorious faith. That saying in the Preface,[1] 'They will have to stand it,' is more than a prophecy. You have made not only Carr's Lane, but the

[1] The preface opens: "Three or four years after I left college I met in the streets of Birmingham a Congregational minister from whom I had heard several very remarkable sermons. . . . He had reached middle-age and I was still a young man, and he talked to me in a friendly way about my ministry. He said, 'I hear that you are preaching doctrinal sermons at Carr's Lane: they will not stand it.' I answered, 'They will have to stand it.'

"There was too much of the insolent self-confidence of youth in both the temper and the form of my reply: but the conception of the ministry which it expressed was, I believe, a just one as far as it went: and it is a conception which, with more or less fidelity, I have endeavoured to fulfil."

thoughtful everywhere do more than bear it—watch for the words you know so well how to speak and they wait so anxiously to hear. God has given you the great consolation of making what seems a season of weakness an occasion for larger usefulness. If the narrow door of the platform from which you could address a party has been shut, the wide door of a pulpit from which you address the whole Church of Christ has been opened. And though, in its day, the narrow door was enlarged by your passing through it, yet at its very broadest it was limited compared with the point where you now stand."

In the spring of the following year Dr. Dale died. To Fairbairn his loss was a great personal sorrow. The two men had stood shoulder to shoulder in the work of establishing Mansfield College, and, as his letters show, Fairbairn had come to depend greatly on the ripe experience and practical sagacity of the elder man. He wrote to Mrs. Dale :

" With him has died the largest, noblest man God has given me to know. All his thoughts like all his actions were on a grand scale : nothing that was little or mean could find place within him. For want of him the whole world seems changed to us."

Along with Dr. Guinness Rogers, Fairbairn conducted the funeral service in Birmingham, and on the previous Sunday preached in Dale's pulpit at Carr's Lane Church. A few months later he proposed at the annual meeting of Mansfield College that Dale's work in connection with it should be commemorated by placing a bust of him in the college buildings and by establishing a lectureship in historical theology which should bear his name. In doing so he spoke warmly of the real self-sacrifice Dale had shown in advocating the transference of Spring Hill College to Oxford, and of the statesmanlike power with which he had elaborated the scheme for the government of the new college.

In the summer of 1895 Fairbairn again visited America, and lectured at Cleveland, Chicago, and Chautauqua. During the visit his correspondence, by some mischance, went astray, and for some weeks he was thoroughly miserable. Having no letters from home he could neither work nor enjoy himself. He writes :

" It is now a fortnight, all but a day, since I had any letters from any source whatever. I am consumed by dreadful hunger." " Those miserable letters ! Where they have gone no man can tell. I have had the University, the local post office, the central post office, the telegraph, all in motion, and still no word. And no other letters have yet come to lighten my troubles. You know my genius for fretting : it has been used to the uttermost, and I am subsiding in sheer desperation into a state of quiescence till Thursday next, when I get to Chautauqua."

Apart from this trouble the trip was a very successful one. He stayed at Chicago with President Harper, and was greatly interested in the development of the brand-new University of the West. It was the summer session, and his lectures were attended by about five hundred miscellaneous students. He describes one lady who sat just beneath the platform, bareheaded and with a pencil stuck in her hair. She is all ears, and when anything strikes her up goes her hand to her head for the pencil and down goes the note in her book. He " tries to get as much fun as he can out of things," and one incident at least gave him more than he bargained for.

" There is to be a reception in my honour on Tuesday night, with an element announced which shocked me not a little. Harper was full of the *Bonnie Brier Bush*. Said he would like to hear it read by one who knew the dialect : asked me to do it. I said, ' Yes, some night,' dreaming no ill, thinking nothing would come of it. Judge my consternation to hear that invitations to the reception announced Dr. Fairbairn would read from the *Bonnie Brier Bush*. This is a go. What to do

I hardly know, for of all foolish things for me to set up as a public reader were the foolishest. I expect we shall all talk so much that reading will be dispensed with. Anyhow, the affair was what they call here a 'surprise.'"

It duly came off, however, and in a later letter he records:

"The reading went off rarely: at least compliments of the American order fell in torrents rather than distilled, like the rain and the dew. I was immediately flooded with requests to repeat elsewhere, but, of course, I am too wary now to be so easily caught."

On the whole Fairbairn was a very kindly critic of things American. He liked the keenness of the people and their passion for knowledge, and for a time, at least, could enjoy the rush and bustle of the towns. On this visit he did no preaching, and therefore had an opportunity of hearing others. His comments on some of the typical American orators are very caustic. He could not stand theology and water, and was greatly chagrined when one preacher meeting him after the service, threw his arms round him and told him that the whole sermon had come out of his last work. "If he hadn't said it, I wouldn't have known it. And certainly it did not make me think better of my book—if such things were in it, or had been found there." As has been said already, Fairbairn regarded this as the most successful of his American visits. In spite of heat and travel he kept in splendid health, and his audiences at the lectures were never larger or more enthusiastic. He greatly enjoyed staying in President Harper's home and pays a high tribute to the domestic skill of Mrs. Harper. She made made him as comfortable as if he were at home, and he could give no higher praise.

As regards literary work in this year (1892), beside reviews and some articles in American papers, Fairbairn contributed two papers to the *Expositor*,[1] on "The Person of Christ:

[1] Series 5, Vol. I.

A Problem in the Philosophy of Religion." They are interesting as showing the point of view from which he still approached the Christological problem and the purely philosophical interpretation which he gave to it. He begins by drawing out the contrast between the estimate formed of Jesus by his enemies, and that of the disciples and the early Church. To the former He was but a common man, to the latter He was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. He then appeals to history and to the collective experience of the Church. In history religion is at once the most universal fact and the most potent element in that movement which we call progress. In religion personality plays always a leading part, and of all religious personalities Jesus Christ is the greatest. We have therefore to face the question how and why did He become so. In the first place this comes about through His sense and feeling of the divine. To the idea of God, which man finds it so impossible to escape and yet so hard to realise, He gave meaning and life. In the hands of Jesus God became the Father of all men, one personal, moral, and gracious Being everywhere touching man and capable of being touched by him. And as He did with God, so with man, gave to him a new and higher valuation. Christ " when He took hold upon and bore human nature dignified the nature He bore. Man seen through His humanity became a being of transcendent value. . . . And so He perfected His first creation, the moral unity of God, by His second, the ethical unity of man." Out of this, then, there came a new interpretation of religion. The work and person of Christ breathed into religion a new spirit, making it both universal and permanent, adapted to man's needs and adaptable to all the varying stages of his development. From this point, then, we return to our problem : " Does the truth lie with the rigorous naturalism of the priest and procurator, or with the audacious supernaturalism of the evangelists ? The answer of history may be

rendered thus: there were two results, an immediate and an ultimate. The immediate result appeared to justify the naturalism. Jesus suffered death, seemed indeed feebler and more mortal than the malefactors who were crucified with Him; but directly, as it were, on the heels of the immediate followed another and very different result—the death of Jesus was the birth of Christianity, and with it He enters on the stage of universal history, not as the obscure Jew or the ill-fated Galilean, but as the Creator of the highest and mightiest of all religions, the main factor of human progress, the maker of a new social order. How, then, philosophy asks, is this to be explained? Without Him or through Him? As the result of natural forces or of supernatural purpose and action? If the former, then we have to explain two series of quite dissimilar yet organically connected phenomena: viz. (a) the rise of the evangelical history and all its related literature, with their wonderful religious ideal, and (b) the progressive realisation of this ideal through centuries of struggle." Fairbairn concludes that the only possible solution of these questions is to be found in the belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, God manifest in the flesh for the fulfilment of the Divine purpose in the enlightening and redeeming of the world.

In the spring of 1896 a proposal was brought before Convocation to confer on Fairbairn the ordinary degree of M.A. by decree of the house. Soon after his settlement in Oxford he had been made an honorary M.A., but this carried with it no vote, and his friends now desired to make him a full member of the University. To the surprise of everyone the decree was opposed, the opposition being voiced by Mr. C. H. Turner, Vice-President of Magdalen College. Mr. Turner was careful to point out that he objected to the proposal simply on constitutional grounds and not from any personal feeling against Fairbairn. He thought that a degree carrying the right to vote should only be given to those who were directly

engaged in University work or teaching. The proposal was warmly supported by the senior Proctor, Mr. P. E. Matheson, of New College, and by Canon Ince, the Regius Professor of Divinity. They contended that, quite apart from his distinction as a theologian, Fairbairn's teaching affected many members of the University, and justified them in regarding him as one who was engaged in University work. The proposal was carried by 94 votes to 29, a majority of 65. Fairbairn wrote of it to his son John as follows:

"*March* 20, 1896.

"Last Tuesday the vote on the degree came on amid quite unexpected excitement. No opposition was looked for, but suddenly Turner, of Magdalen, got up, spoke most flattering things as to me, but advised the withdrawal of the decree and substitution of the honorary D.C.L. for M.A.—which would have left things as they had been. He was surrounded by a strong knot of partisans—young high Churchmen. The opposition had been hatched in —— and organised by H——. M—— entered into it, a few other men, and one or two clericals. Quite a surprise it was, but Matheson leapt to his feet and made a good speech. He urged that I was really engaged in University teaching, and presided over a body of University teachers, and regretted that the thing was not done graciously. Ince, the Regius Professor of Divinity, rose and supported Matheson, speaking from his personal knowledge of the good work done by Mansfield. Then came the vote, when the decree was carried by 94 to 29. By the evening post came a letter from Turner telling me how he regretted to have had to perform so ungracious a part, but saying it was on purely constitutional and not at all on personal grounds that he had opposed, and now that the University had so decided congratulating me on the decision. I replied thanking him for his note and assuring him that I appreciated his motives. With difficulty I kept myself from saying that I could have wished he had used his liberty to raise the constitutional question earlier, as it had been decided that men much less closely related to the University than I should

receive a degree. But I thought it better to stay my hand and not indulge my feeling."

After the vote Canon Ince wrote to Fairbairn as follows:

"CHRIST CHURCH,

"*March* 19, 1896.

"I was quite taken by surprise at finding that there was any opposition in Convocation to admitting you as a full M.A., and could not resist the impulse to say at once that I thought the alleged ground of opposition was unfair. For though, as I said at the time, Mansfield College is no more a college of the University than Pusey House or Wycliffe Hall, yet almost all your members are, I believe, members of the University, and you are constantly engaged in teaching them and preparing them for University honours, and, I may say, with considerable success. So that I cannot see how it can be said that you, as a resident, are not taking an active part in academic work—to say nothing of the anomaly that many members of your staff should be full members of Convocation while you, their Principal, after ten years' service in Oxford, should be refused that privilege. I am glad to have used my influence in remedying an anomaly which to my mind would also have been an injustice, and I can only regret that the vote was not unanimous."

In 1896, in addition to the articles on Manning in the *Contemporary* and on the education controversy, which have been referred to elsewhere, Fairbairn published in the *Expositor* a series of papers entitled "Christ's Attitude to His Own Death." They constitute a study of the self-consciousness of Jesus which is full of insight and spiritual feeling. It is based on the same rather uncritical view of the synoptic and Johannine narratives and their relations which we saw underlay the earlier Studies in the Life of Christ. But its aim is more psychological than historical, and while it is a useful addition to the writer's previous attempts to interpret the mind of Christ, it has no very

marked doctrinal interest or value. Indeed, Fairbairn himself deprecates the idea of giving any merely intellectual or dogmatic interpretation to the experience of Jesus. Any "analytical handling" of the Passion or application to it of "legal fictions" or "judicial processes" he would regard as almost profane. He would rather study the experience of Jesus in and in regard to it, as a means of further explicating His mind towards God and man and His own work. For it is in the death of Jesus Christ that he finds the consummation of His whole activity and the ground of man's salvation and hope.[1] This being so, the view which Jesus Himself took of His death becomes something far more than merely a matter of curious enquiry. These articles, along with certain of his books and college lectures, show how definitely Fairbairn accepted the view of the consciousness of Jesus as normative for Christian thought on the subject both of His Person and work. It was to him the seed-plot of much of his theology.

Just at this period Fairbairn was much occupied with his book on the *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*. But

[1] On this point Dr. Denney wrote in the *British Weekly* as follows:

"When Dr. Fairbairn published his great work, *The Place of Christ in Modern Theology*, many of his readers were disappointed with his inadequate treatment of the greatest of Christian doctrines. A few pages only were devoted to the death of Christ, and suggestive as they were, they left much to be desired. The characteristic series of articles he has just contributed to the *Expositor*, under the title of 'Christ's attitude to His own death,' goes some way to supply the deficiencies of his earlier work. It discloses, at all events, the grappling of an independent and vigorous mind, trained both in historical and theological criticism, with the problem of problems.

"Dr. Fairbairn possesses one capital qualification for dealing with the subject. He has a sense of its dimensions. He is not under the delusion that the New Testament can be understood while its doctrine of the Cross is ignored, discredited, or made one in an indefinite number of Christian truths. The conception of Christ's death as a propitiation is, he says, 'so integral alike to the history and the thought of the New Testament as to deserve to be described as its organic and organising idea.' It was high time that this should be said by someone with Dr. Fairbairn's authority."

even this did not exhaust the whole of his energies. He was constantly writing reviews in the *Speaker* and articles in the *Contemporary*. Among the latter were "Some Recent English Theologians" and "Oxford and Jowett," both of which were ultimately republished in *Catholicism: Roman and Anglican*. In the former of these he pays a fine tribute to the work of Hatch, and in the latter gives an equally fine, though more discriminating, discussion of Jowett and his work in Oxford. Fairbairn had a genuine appreciation of Jowett's many great qualities, and the fact that he by no means sympathised with his theological position did not in any way lessen his admiration of the man. He recognised the genuine piety which underlay the shy causticity of his exterior, and he knew that much of that action which was most open to criticism was due to scorn of conventions and to a real love of truth. The attempt to estimate Jowett's place in Oxford gave him the kind of opportunity he liked for sketching the history of men and movements in the University. This he always did, not only with great insight, but with a loving care which showed what pains he had spent in learning to understand and appreciate the place of his adoption. About the time that he was writing on Jowett Fairbairn was called upon to pay tribute to another of his old Oxford friends. In 1897 Dr. Legge, the Professor of Chinese, died at a ripe old age. He had been one of the first to welcome Fairbairn and Mansfield to Oxford, and his counsel and sympathy were always ready. Fairbairn conducted his funeral, and the terms in which he spoke of Dr. Legge's devotion as a missionary and of his enthusiasm for Chinese and the religions of China but reflected his own feelings. He had learned much from Dr. Legge himself, and though he owed him a great debt as a Chinese scholar, he both admired and envied his success as a missionary.

The following letters belong to this period:

*To his Wife.*

"OXFORD,

"*March* 27, 1890.

". . . Here all goes on as usual: Jack is in London; examination goes on in the school. Yesterday I got home from Salisbury; all as usual. The visit to London was very anxious—saw many people on Monday, and got back to Spicer's dead tired. Went down to Salisbury; drove out in the afternoon to see George Herbert's small church at Bemerton—beautiful little place, fit home for such a man. Delivered lecture on Milton at night to an audience which quite filled the church. On Wednesday forenoon called on the Dean, who took me over the Cathedral; returned here at 3. Had a busy afternoon with letters, etc.

"I return to London on Saturday. These sermons at Westminster are very heavy; I don't take kindly to continuous preaching in one place.

"I could have wished to come and see you, but feel I ought to remain. It is one thing to have a house like the Byres, where all are busy and quite trained to it from childhood; another thing to have a house like this. I shall manage to get down in time for the University sermon, possibly on the 16th; you will stay with a quieter and happier mind that I am here. Keep as cheery as possible and write me often."

*To his Wife.*

"CATSKILLS, U.S.A.,

"*August* 12, 1890.

"No letters have come as yet, but shall send by this mail record of days.

"We came here on Saturday. It was very hot in New York; but the Hudson was lovely; enjoyed it even more than at first. Alliott came, bringing his sister, a widow. Misfortune had driven her husband out here; he had been an active and important man in Manchester, a great politician, vigorous Liberal, thorough-going Non-

conformist, one of the young band which had surrounded the Haworths in early days. And when he came out here he could find nothing he cared for—the churches were good, but politics not to his mind, nor was business, and practically he broke his heart. She is a brave and good woman, and does her best for her sons, who yet look with their father's love back to the Old Country.

"We came here by train. It is a beautiful spot, far lovelier than Briggs' old place, and more accessible. Yesterday we went up to the top of South Mountain, 3000 feet high; to-day we go to High Peak, 3800 feet. The weather is cool, air transparent, scenery lovely, and the house comfortable—a combination that ought to make a contented man.

"Briggs' family are very nice, finely trained in many ways; speak German admirably, are good musicians, yet withal so simple that they hardly seem to be profound. The eldest boy is a fine fellow; the enthusiasm with which he spoke of his father was quite refreshing. The ceremonious courtesy of these Americans becomes almost a kind of humour: yesterday young Briggs was invariably by all members of the party other than his own family addressed as Mr., all the girls as Miss. The familiar first name or the unqualified last one is here unknown.

"We had yesterday a game of tennis: it was rather slow, but took a good deal out of one, three sets, narrowly contested—one a deuce set, which we gained by a single point, a deuce game. In the three we had two deuce sets.

"If things go on as they have begun, this trip should do me good; altogether it is one of the most refreshing changes I have known.

"You will now be in Scotland. I hope all will enjoy themselves; see that John gets a good holiday. We leave on Thursday for Chautauqua."

*To his Wife.*

"NEW YORK,

"*March* 22, 1892.

". . . . In spite of the storm I never had a more enjoyable voyage. It was one long equinoctial gale with

only a day's rest, as it were, to gather breath; but we were happier and more fearless than if we had been on dry land. My appetite never failed, and as of old got complimented on being a rare old salt. Our table was a bright and jovial one. Two of its members were often missing, Dale and Miss Forwood, who appeared only once after we got away from Ireland. They were Sir William Forwood, a Tory, but a good fellow, kind, considerate, able to bear chaff and join in it gaily; Mr. Johnstone, a shipowner, an Ulster man, rigid Presbyterian, yet full of good sense, and most excellent wit; a gentleman, who had been Vice-Consul at Honolulu, a very self-satisfied person, who imagined that Honolulu because of its connection with himself had been made the centre of the universe, and Providence had proved its wisdom by making *him*, the son of a poor Nonconformist minister, a successful man of business and a Churchman. Yet he was a most excellent subject for fun, and this was helped greatly by Captain Brewster, who turned out one of the best of fellows, and not at all the man I feared he might be. Honolulu was ever figuring in the speech of Davis, whereat Brewster would wink in the slyest and most imperceptible of fashions, or tip me a hint to note its coming, and then in a slightly stuttering tongue, somewhat like Charles Lamb's, cap it with some wondrous tale. He had travelled and served in India, Africa, and all over Ireland, had shot and fished in Scotland, and was on his way for similar purpose to America. One of his stories was this. He was once instructing his company in musketry drill; was explaining how the ball was affected by the accelerating influence of gravitation and the retarding influence of the atmosphere. Then he stopped and asked an Irish corporal what would happen were neither of these agents existing. 'Sure, sir, the ball would run right round the world and take meself behind!'—only he used a word which must not be written. So on the whole we had a happy and adventurous and really jolly voyage, though the constant knocking about of the ship rather gave one a knocked-about feeling.

"We came here; Briggs came to see us on Sunday night. We were invited to a club dinner yesterday,

where both Dale and I had to speak. Last night I delivered my first lecture; had a capital audience, and all passed off successfully. . . ."

*To his Wife and Bairns.*

"NEW YORK,

"*March* 29, 1892.

". . . Here comes a record of events. On Friday last we went to a debate between Yale and Harvard. It was rare fun; held in a theatre, crammed full; we on the stage, ladies and gentlemen in abundance; heads of the Universities out to hear their men, papas and mamas to applaud their sons, coaches to see how their pupils would do. We expected a row, but all was as seemly as a church on Sunday—even a little more so. Dale said beforehand: 'There are a fine knot in the gallery; look out for squalls from that quarter'; but none came. All were sober as judges, save for an occasional round of most orderly applause. The question was: 'Ought we to have restricted immigration?' Harvard affirmative, Yale negative, three on each side. The Harvard men were more eloquent, showed better form, very platformy, yet free and vigorous; Yale men very statistical and good at argument. All had been carefully coached; speeches written, committed to memory, recited, with reference to the subject, but not to the speakers. The Harvard coach—i.e. teacher of elocution—was there; also Yale one; quite as jealous as if it had been a struggle on the river. They had a famous man to preside, who balanced the case at the end, telling a good story where a puzzled judge, persuaded that both sides were right, adjourned the case *sine die*.

"Next day we went down to see the 'Varsity crew; they were out, but interest in boats quite as keen here as at Oxford. Yale for many years headed the river, i.e. was above Harvard, but last year Harvard prevailed. They have an ingenious contrivance for the oar, a sort of rowlock, which so catches the oar as to keep it well locked in, and with a short spike in it which so catches a small button on the oar as to prevent a 'crab,' the said spike being called 'anti-crab.' Sorry I cannot describe it better. . . ."

"NEWHAVEN, CONN.,

"*April* 1, 1892.

"TO ALL MY DEAR ONES AT HOME,

"A letter on All Fools' Day! Yet till I wrote the above I did not remember this was the Carnival of Fools! We at all events will be wise, for here no hint of it has been at any time. But we are the gravest of divines.

"The biggest half of the work is now over; only two more lectures here, and four more in New York. Eight out of fourteen delivered, only six to come. Everything goes well; good audiences; here, especially sympathetic, kindly, quite American. It's worth while lecturing here.

"What shall I begin with? Yesterday I had my photograph taken; bought for Andrew photographs of 'Varsity crew and football team; went afterwards to see a curious thing—freshers in training for the river. Imagine a big room in the ground floor of a gymnasium, a large water tank, model eight fixed up in it, sliding seats and all; holes in the blades of the oars to let the water through as the boat cannot move; mirror suspended at the side of the men, where they can see themselves, sitting and rowing, and all swinging and sliding in time, watching themselves in the mirror. It was very funny, budging never a bit, yet looking as if they were, seeing themselves all the time, and being coached into form and harmony. I sorely wanted a photograph of this exhibition, but could not get one.

"Last night a great reception in my honour; saw all the professors; everyone quite gracious; a mathematician, Newton by name; an engineer, who wrote on theology; a botanist, who knew the older men, but not Vines—fine art, philosophy, and science professors without end. On Wednesday I attended a club of the professors, and had to give an account of Mansfield and Oxford—all very interested. Ray Palmer and daughter were here; she very sorry Barbara was not with me. I have had yesterday and to-day to answer seven letters of invitation to various places, Philadelphia, Boston, Northampton, and places you never heard of—plenty to keep me going till autumn. One of the queerest was a

letter from an old Scotsman, who knew Byres, Bathgate, etc.; was married to a Marion Shields; a man Inglis by name; and was very anxious that I should visit him; but Fisher has asked him to come to lunch. I was rather hoping to get a little quiet, as the grind of continual lecturing, with the necessary intervals of meals, fills up all my time. Yet my health is splendid; the weather is splendid, simply perfect; and all as gay as may be. To-day I walked with Dr. Munger, a local minister, a little way into the country; everything was lovely; air clear as crystal, to breathe it and look through it a pleasure, yet though stimulating it is not strengthening, so little calculated to encourage walking. Though the sunshine is so bright, not a leaf is out, nor a promise of one appearing. No top-coat is needed, save as it draws towards evening; when the sun goes down the air is very chill.

"I write in haste; the post goes earlier than I expected; so best love to all."

"New York,

"*April* 5, 1892.

"To my Dear Folks at Home, old and young,

"Here I am 'a'maist plotted wi' heat.' I never was in such a stew, as it were confined in a stove within stoves. We are having what they call 'a hot spell.' The temperature yesterday was 81: we had our winter clothing on; houses were all heated by furnace as usual, and thermometers register indoors as a rule 75; and what with this heat inside and the heat out, I can tell you it was a business to live, to say nothing of lecturing. And as all my lighter things were at Newhaven, we had anything but a 'lovely time.' However, I got through—did my best—and delivered what was thought the lecture of the course, though to see everybody fanning themselves, perspiring and groaning, was not a beautiful sight.

"Staying at Ray Palmer's was very enjoyable; he has a beautiful house, well managed, well situated, with abundant appearance of comfort. He is a good man; has a good church; is quite the patriarch of his district; and is a real father to his people. Two sisters stay with him—nice kindly women—though the daughter manages

the house. His wife's death has been a fearful blow to him, from which he does not seem to have recovered.

"Yesterday forenoon we had a two hours' drive, and enjoyed it greatly; saw old New England villages, and very pretty and old-fashioned they are, quite pleasant sights in this land of new and garish buildings. It was only after I left Bridgeport and was on the way hither that the heat became so intolerable. The audiences in New York have vastly improved, and, as I have grown accustomed to the place, it has been easier to speak in it. At Yale the lectures have been more largely attended, the speaking has been easier, and altogether I have been more happy in my work. However, I have only five lectures to deliver now, and all has gone better, even in spite of the heat, than I could have anticipated. Only it feels somewhat lonesome now and then, especially if one is too hot to sleep, and home keeps company with wakefulness. Another week and all will be over, and we shall begin to feel once more the breath of the sea. But as soon as the lectures are over I'll send you a telegram that you may know all is well. I had a note from Mr. Scott, of Alleghany; he says Andrew Carnegie is likely to cross with us on the 16th. If virtue is to refuse invitations, I ought to be most virtuous in your eyes; some days I have had a dozen letters to answer, and my refusals have been most impartial. The last was from Bliss, who came in person to urge it, but I declined—think how good I am! I send you a collection of curiosities. Thanks for news; sorry girls have not written; shall be glad of John's letter.

"Ever with love to you all, from restless old Father."

*To his Wife.*

"NEWHAVEN,

"*April* 8, 1892.

"Sorry to hear that you still keep rather out of sorts; hope your strength may be up before very long. Glad to say that mine keeps improving; everything seems encouraging. Audiences here most encouraging, sympathetic, large, appreciative. New York also passed off well; only two more and I am done.

"Here is an entertaining bit of news, with a lifelike portrait. Andrew lifted into fame; got a gliff when I saw it. I confided my hopes and high opinion of my athletic son to the young man who took me round, never dreaming what was about to happen. Here they know not distinction between College and 'Varsity—so a son in his college eight comes out as you see. You notice I am in consequence the most popular lecturer who ever appeared here.

"Here the lectures are over. To-morrow I go to Dr. Bradford's; lecture on Monday and Tuesday; attend reception in my honour at Union Seminary on Wednesday; meeting Congregational Club on Thursday; Dr. Lyman Abbott's church on Friday; sail on Saturday. I wish the day were here, and we on board. But feel fitter than when I landed; the way in which I have stood the work here has surprised all. In the interval lunch with the President of Union on Tuesday; lunch with the President of Columbia on Thursday; dine with Dr. Abbott on Friday. So many things crowded into the last week.

"On Wednesday Lyman Abbott entertained a large party at lunch—almost all editors and newspaper men of mark in the city; very pleasant. I had a short speech to make; not in the best of form. Last night the President of Yale gave a grand reception, quite a brilliant affair."

*To Dr. Dale.*

"ABERDEEN,

"*January* 10, 1893.

"I begin to feel as if I could again breathe more freely, and the first use I make of my coming freedom is to write to you.

"I must have seemed a forgetful soul these few months past; but, on the contrary, my conscience has been a daily monitor, though his monitions have been heard only to be rebuked by the imperious necessities of the desk. But all news of you has been heard greedily, and the good news—and it has all been good—has been peculiarly welcome.

"I shall be in Aberdeen till the end of next week, returning for the opening of term. The last series of Gifford's went off very well; the second series is about to open—to-morrow—and of them we can only hope. But this is the native air of metaphysics; and it is exhilarating. One of the professors here was very amusing over the spectacle of cautious and canny and cold-blooded Aberdonians growing hot with enthusiasm and applause over 'cosmo-teleological,' and words so prodigious in sound, whatever they might be in sense. Yet it was good to feel the fire within or beneath the ice.

"I am not going to write much on College business. If you can't come to see us, then I shall come to see you. Some day soon after my return I'll come along for an hour or two, and we shall review our past history and present situation. Happily, we shall now have an unanswerable case for a Summer School in '94. The Church manifesto has settled the matter. That policy was due in part to Sanday; some hotter spirits were anxious to have an annual school—but we shall watch their success. I suspect a college or two may volunteer the entertaining."

*To Dr. Dale.*

"OXFORD,

"*March* 8, 1893.

"Thanks for your kind and brotherly letter. One of my foremost duties was to lay the book at your feet. There was no man who was more before me as a sort of conscience at certain points; and the very attempt to fit myself into your soul made me at once more just to my own soul and the truth. . . .

"But, dear Dale, you must not think the thought, far less breathe the word, 'resignation.' We feel we cannot spare you from the Chair. We love you too well to let you go. To some of us Mansfield means the headship of Dale. And now that I am freer than of old, I shall come at intervals and report to you how things go, and hear your judgment. . . ."

*To his Daughter.*

"ABERDEEN,

"*December* 11, 1893.

"Your letter with all its news was very welcome. I am sorry to hear of the Laws, but hope Margaret will soon be well. Since leaving home I have had a very happy time. In Glasgow I met the new Master of Balliol; saw Sir James and Lady Marwick, called on them at their new house, which is very pleasant, and they came and lunched with me the next day at the Smiths'. I got here late on Saturday night. Yesterday I went to my own old church, and heard Mr. Brown. Everything is very much changed, so many of the people dead or left, and the day was very stormy, which kept many people at home. Mr. Brown preached, and a very good sermon it was, hardly any better could have been preached in Aberdeen that day. I went out to church with Mr. and Mrs. Crombie. Their daughter, Mrs. Murray, who had for years seemed to be dying, is now almost quite well, and the cure seems almost marvellous. I came home early in the afternoon, and have been hard at work ever since. Last night we had a fearful storm, wind high, almost a tempest, and the house shook under it. What a night it must have been at sea; and they say that the storms of this season have been already so violent that the losses at sea have been greater than within living memory. . . .

"Ever your loving Father."

*To his Wife.*

"ABERDEEN,

"*December* 14, 1893.

"I have got the second lecture over, and happily. The day was miserable, wet, and gloomy; I had to light the gas about two o'clock, and it fell in torrents. Yet though we had to wade, and in a flat-bottomed boat could indeed have sailed, through the College square, we had a good audience. And the lecture was the easiest of the

series ; Pirie said he could have gone on listening to such Gifford's as these. In the evening I went to Ramsay's ; small dinner, but very pleasant. Giles, who married one of the Edersheims, Prof. Pirie, Miss Binnie, whose father was a professor in the Free Church College and lived at Ferry Hill, were all the party. We had a very good talk. Ramsay is in better heart over things here : Geddes is falling into the background ; moved in the University Court the other day, and could get no person to second his motion. And they say this is the common result ; everyone feels that his place is not so easy, nor has he it all his own way as of old.

" The classes are many of them to be closed to-morrow owing to Milligan's funeral. But my lecture must go on as my days are so few. The funeral sermon falls to me. I wrote resigning the pulpit for Sunday on the score of it being the duty of a colleague to preach. But the Faculty met, concluded that I was as good as a colleague, and requested me as an old friend to discharge the duty. I wanted for many reasons to get free, but it was not possible—so had simply to buckle to it. That means a special sermon, yet not so different from what I had designed. . . ."

*To his Wife.*

" ABERDEEN,

" *January* 13, 1894.

" You will be tired to-day after your journey to London. Here all goes as usual, and I feel well. The lectures go off fairly, and so far have been more successful than the previous course. The correspondent who reviews me is an ancient enemy of Dr. Legge, and deals with me as a way of again dealing with him. However, he won't want an answer.

" Last night I was at the Harrowers. Splendid dinner, large company—Geddes at his most ponderous, and Lady G—— most condescending. To-day I lunched with the Piries ; nowhere do I like better to go ; they are most hearty and happy. There was again a large company and some very nice people, including the aunt of a young man named Paton, who went to Wadham,

but did not like Oxford, and went down in disgust. Everything threatens a busy week, as I must make a good few calls before leaving. All my dinners must be repaid by a visit, which is not always the easiest thing to do.

"When over at the Harrowers I said to Geddes in the drawing-room: 'You used to have a Turner's engraving here, and I remember the first night I dined with you Paul Chalmers breaking into enthusiastic speech over Turner.' 'Ah!' he said, bending his ponderous head, 'that was a brilliant young man, but he had a most unhappy demise.' All emotion vanished in face of so ponderous a word. . . ."

*To his Wife.*

"ABERDEEN,

"*January* 17, 1894.

"Well, mother darling, been at your old tricks and getting ill again in my absence? I can never leave you for any length of time without your falling ill. And going to London, rushing from shop to shop, riding in public buses, sitting at open windows—what folly have we here? Take a lesson from your sober and cautious husband, who carefully keeps himself out of harm's way and does his work, mindful of the sad rashness that dwells at home.

"Well, soberly, I am sorry to hear you are not up to much—but hope it is only a passing headache. Influenza seems pretty well over, and to-morrow I shall, I hope, have a letter in your own hand—which though it says little, is always welcome because yours.

"Helen's news was refreshing. Glad to hear of the men, though sorry about Scott.

"Nothing very fresh to tell you. Dined with Dr. Robson last night. He had Mr. Paterson; Mrs. was not able to be, down with a cold. Young was there, U.P. minister, the original of the great talent for natural rest. Had a long walk with Dr. Stewart in the afternoon; saw the sea for the first time this visit; came along the sands and felt the salt breath; good for one's tone of mind and body. I can hardly tell you how much I want to get

home, or how slowly the time passes. My soul turns every night and every hour of the day to Oxford, and here nothing delights or interests for the desire to be home. But it cannot be till Saturday, and then the weary journey! . . ."

*To his Wife.*

"ADALBERT COLLEGE,
"CLEVELAND, OHIO,
"*July* 10, 1895.

". . . . Sunday was a hot day, thermometer rose to 100° in the shade; night was almost as bad as the day, hardly any sleep possible. On Monday it was a little cooler, and I travelled here with comparative comfort. I met President Harper, of Chicago, in the train, and arranged with him about work there. This is a beautiful place. We are living in the ladies' college, the rooms of the lady Principal being assigned to me. I have a sitting-room, bedroom, with a bathroom off it, so that I am as comfortable as could be. The school is a small affair. Our largest meetings have not exceeded 100. The audience is of the usual character. Some have come long distances, almost all are old hearers of mine. But one or two new; one a lone schoolmaster from an inaccessible place in Tennessee, had found deliverance through my last book, and came here on a kind of pilgrimage. He has opened a class for its study, and maintains quite a new heart has come into the people because of it. He tells me some Presbyterian review in the Southern States began an article on the 'Coming Struggle' by selecting *Christ in Modern Theology* as the leader of the foes that must be vanquished, and devoted itself to fighting me to the death. One has to come here in order to discover how far we have travelled out of the darkness towards the light. . . ."

*To his Wife.*

"UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO,
"*August* 1, 1895.

". . . The 'Varsity is really a wonderful creation. It has been barely four years in existence; has an endowment of 1½ million pounds; has 164 professors and lecturers, 1500 students, four terms in the year, the

summer one, now in progress, being specially intended for teachers in schools and colleges, about 800 being present. Its head professors—i.e. the heads of their departments—have salaries of £1400 a year; its President has £2000, but of this £400 goes in house rent. The minor professors and lecturers descend in various grades tions to £300. But the story of how the millions of dollars came in is marvellous, a romance in its way. Chicago is determined to have a big university; it is resolved to outdo the world; and Harper will help it. I heard a tale of how these things are done out West. There is a 'varsity in California founded as a memorial to a son, Leland Stanford, junior. The father and founder sat at dinner one day next to Eliot, President of Harvard, and enquired, 'How much money have you in Harvard?' Eliot calculated 'about 15 million dollars.' Whereat Stanford turned to his wife and said: 'Sarah, we can go five millions better than that; can't we, Sarah? We shall say twenty millions for ours.' But some famous law case is coming between the 'varsity and its dollars. . . ."

The following letters are written to his eldest son John, whose health had been failing, and who spent the winter of 1895–6 in a tour round the world:

"OXFORD,
"*November* 29, 1895.

"Here we are just at the week's end watching each post for the Teneriffe letter and calculating that you will reach New Zealand just about the time your Cape letter reaches us. Once you are on solid land we shall feel in touch with each other again, even though that will be only for a season. . . . This week has been remarkable for letters. I had two begging for copies of my books, both on the same morning and both from Y.M.C.A.'s. I had two—one a second letter—from lunatics, the one evidently in fear of want, begging for money, the other from some man who had got a revelation which he wished to communicate to the world through me. This last kind is growing rather stale. Another was from a man who had dispensed with his old beliefs, asking me to recommend him a book which

might supply him with reasons for so doing. There is a marvellous recurrence of special types of letters: for weeks I shall be without any of these wonderful specimens, then all at once there is an outbreak and a multitude arrive within a few days. Once you go back to Bedlam you must study this matter for me, and say whether it is the weather or waves of electrical energy or sun spots or tides or what. It's obscure enough to puzzle yet intoxicate a German."

"OXFORD,

"*December* 19, 1895.

"Here we are in the second week of vacation and it doesn't seem to have begun. I've been busy on various things. Wrote three articles for the *Speaker*—by the way, if anything occurs to you descriptive of ship or voyage or journey or anything, you send it home and I'll get it in. Have been on College business to London, Birmingham, and elsewhere. Enclosed is a second letter on Education. The *Times* much more courteous, so the *Guardian*. Former said I was 'calm and dignified': the latter 'more sweetness and light.' What had riled the *Times* was the reference to Salisbury: see smaller cutting. Quite a relief to find so little buncombe. They will have told you poor A—— is ploughed again. It seems as if the gate were too strait for him to get through.

"I saw Caird yesterday: he is very pleased with my attitude on Education. So Fremantle, from whom I have just had a letter.

"A fine hullabaloo about Venezuela. The Yankees are riding the high horse and blowing the war trumpet, but we are keeping our senses, certain all will blow over. Turkey is a worse affair: it is horrible. Armenia is being wiped out—the most shocking thing, not only within living memory, but in modern times. And we too under Beaconsfield in the days of 'Peace with Honour' undertook the care of Armenia and became responsible for the good behaviour of the Turk."

"OXFORD,

"*January* 2, 1896.

"I have a third letter in to-day's *Times*. I shall send it again: meanwhile must keep it beside me till it is

printed elsewhere, in case of needing to reply. There is to be a Town's meeting on the 20th at which I am to take the chair. Aren't we just now in a high state of confusion? S. Africa is no paradise, and one can hardly tell what may have happened before this reaches you. And America and Armenia are on our hands with all the Continent furiously raging against us. We need to keep cool heads."

"OXFORD,

"*January* 9, 1896.

"All to-night I have been engaged in discussion with an old student, and it has been very tiresome. He is a good bit of a fool, one too of the worst kind, who can see things only from his own point of view and will not allow reason to be in any other. He has become a socialist, a Fabian who will force all churches to accept Fabian politics as the last gospel on pain of going for ever to the dogs. I wonder one argues with a wrong-headed youth. I wish I did not feel responsible in a manner for my own men. It would be ever so much easier just to let each one go his own way, and learn that he had run his head against a stone wall by feeling the crack on his crown. But they will appeal to me when they get into a mess, and I spend many miserable argumentative hours in trying to get them out. But it is well to do it for the good of the whole.

"Yesterday I was out with Wallace. He is one of the few men still up. But our talk was mainly about philosophy, or war and war's alarms. It was a good thing you did not go to Johannesburg, you would hardly have got away in the crowd. Here we are in such a series of scares —one after another—so much so that we hardly know what any day may bring forth. It has been touch and go with Germany. If Jameson had succeeded, war would have been certain, so the quidnuncs say.

"I have not been out on the cycle this week. Last week I had quite extensive practice, describing a circle round Holywell three several times. I hope to get out again to-morrow. On Monday Albert Spicer and I called to see the Charity Commissioners. We shall likely get a new scheme for Mansfield which will leave us with a freer hand. He was surprised when Alderson, one of the

Commissioners, and a brother-in-law of the Marquis of Salisbury, said to me that he had read the letters in the *Times* and entirely approved and sympathised with my point of view and argument. By the way, we have just had £5000 left us to found a fellowship. So we get on."

"OXFORD,

"*January* 23, 1896.

"We see that quite a number of loyal meetings are being held in New Zealand—colonists protesting love to the Mother Country and so on. I have been half surmising that you might be at one or two. But you'll be better engaged, I suppose, away in the country visiting hot springs, mountains, glaciers, and other marvellous and beautiful things. We have had no frost, only moist, muggy, unhealthy, cheerless weather. For a month we never saw the sun, and thought how happy you would be with sunshine all around you making its way with health and light into your very blood and bones. I am thriving amid it all. To-day I came out for the first time in a Norfolk jacket on my own bicycle, rode out as far as Littlemore, turned at the railway bridge and came back. In descending the hill near Iffley I met Collier coming up: he seemed inclined to stop: I put on the brake and got off in a very awkward fashion. He was vastly pleased: I was not to ride up hills and to be moderate, but, he said, 'This is the way to knock nails into the doctor's coffin; it will add ten years to your life.' This is all very fine and funny, but I like the exercise. It is doing me all the good in the world, and I felt quite a sporter as I went out in jacket and knickers. If this goes on one can hardly tell what may happen. We had a meeting on voluntary schools last Monday night. I was chairman and made a speech. We'll send you an Oxford paper with the reports. There have been no more letters in the *Times*. War and its alarms have occupied all minds. The trouble is not over. How it may be with America it is hard to tell. And meanwhile word has come of the death of Henry of Battenberg and the end of the Ashanti campaign. But these things you will know as soon as we."

"OXFORD,

"*January* 30, 1896.

"This has been just a regular term week. Men coming and going, lectures, visits, new faces and old. Cycling goes on, hitherto it has been a great success. I am hard at work on an article on Manning for the *Contemporary*. The *Speaker* ones came off. Editor wrote wanting me to take up the other side of his character. I had showed the secular, now I should show the spiritual. How could I, when all the spiritual was secular? Horton wrote that he had spotted the articles, and urged me to write a book, which possibly I may do—my long-projected history of religious thought in the nineteenth century. The Education controversy has clean died down in face of all the turmoil. Nobody knows what may come out of all the various complications, and every day we seem to expect serious news from somewhere. There is little, however, of a public kind you will not know.

"I made my first ride through Oxford in all the dignity of my new clothes and on the majesty of my bicycle yesterday. I set off at 2.30 p.m. Down George Street I went and along the Seven Bridges Road as far as Hunter's, near Eynsham, and then returned as fresh as possible. . . . You would be sorry to hear we had a fire at Mansfield House. Poor Alden's room was gutted, all his books burned, a MS. which he had ready for the Press, and a lot of other things—nothing of his being insured. The House was, but we shall need a good deal to put it in order. One man has promised £1000 if £4000 is raised, but so far this week has seen only £500. We are busy at the same time with the Dale Memorial Fund."

"OXFORD,

"*March* 4, 1896.

"I had a long talk with Burdon Sanderson the other day. He said you should look into medical questions, find out all you could about climates, visit health resorts like Colorado, and in general use your chance to make yourself more skilled as a medicine man. One day I met Ritchie and he was delighted with the news of you,

as were we. Never was novel devoured as we devour your letters. First they are read aloud, either myself or Barbara reading, then they are perused in detail. I go over them with a map of New Zealand, and so we follow you from place to place.

"Oxford has been convulsed over the women's question. The B.A. remains for the present a masculine adornment. There has been no such hullabaloo in my time, eloquence being expended in a quite unheard-of manner. The President of Magdalen orated on behalf of sisters who were in brains equal, or even superior, to their brothers. Strachan Davidson bewailed the greed for degrees, and said they marked not knowledge, but the kind and mode of life which men had and women could not enjoy. Dicey threatened them with an invasion of Parliament headed by Arthur Balfour and Joe Chamberlain, as well as with the bann of the Archbishop of Canterbury, if they did not admit women, while he suggested that if, as some advised, a special women's 'Varsity was founded, they might appropriate some of the revenues of Oxford. But in spite of the eloquence of Warren and the forensic speech of Dicey the women's cause was lost by a vote of 225 to 140. For the past three weeks we have been almost snowed up with pamphlets. They have come daily, some mornings four or five, in all sizes, quartos, folios, octavos, all eloquent of the ruin the women would work in the 'Varsity were they admitted, and of the ruin the 'Varsity would inflict were they refused. So we have come to the end of one stage, but another will soon begin."

"Oxford,

"*March* 20, 1896.

"This has been quite a full and exciting week. I had a good time in Aberdeen. Stayed with the Crombies. Had two services, went out and preached at King's College in the morning, delivered a lecture to an audience of 2000 in the new Mitchell Hall of the University in the afternoon. Altogether it was a wonderful sight. Went in search of a new 'Don'[1] on the Saturday, failed to find one. Good ones dear, cheap ones bad. So I left an order to send on a good one if such could be found.

[1] A Scotch terrier, to replace a favourite of the same name.

"On Wednesday I went up to London to a dinner given by Bryce to the members of the Commission. It went off very well, quite like old times to be among old faces again. Some amusing tales were told as to criticisms on the *Report*. In my part I had at one point quoted Plato. This had been fastened on by a reviewer as the real work of the Chairman, for he was a classical scholar, and in one of his questions had made reference to Plato. Sadler, speaking as the man who had had most to do with watching the reception of the *Report*, said the most interesting and elaborate of all the reviews had been occupied with my definition of secondary education.

"Mansfield has been quite in luck lately. A Mr. Yates, of Leeds, has left us £10,000 for a Professorship—a good legacy. An old lady was here yesterday who is giving us a scholarship in memory of her husband. We are getting an original picture of George Whitfield by the master of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and we have got from J. W. Willans a beautiful Luther Bible."

"OXFORD,
"*March* 27, 1896.

"On Saturday I went up to town to preach. Mother and Helen had gone the day before to see the sports. Just as I was leaving Gray came in to say Oxford had again won the boat race. It had been a splendid struggle. Your mother was full of enthusiasm, delighted at having for the first time in her life seen one of the races which will count among the two or three greatest. The whole affair was a rich surprise. It was comical to read the papers, which had been running Cambridge for all they were worth. I got an *Echo* on reaching London. The account of the race sent in telegrams from various points ran like this: 'Cambridge started clean and at once began to lead. Light blues rowing in splendid style, dark blues labouring hard, but not equal to rivals,' and so on. 'Barnes' Bridge, light blues leading by a length,' and then comes the unexpected and miraculous paragraph—'Oxford won.' I send you some cuttings. Evidently Gold has made a name for himself. The work the hardest and the judgment the best since 1877, the year of the dead heat. Bab won bet of two pairs of gloves from Alfred Dale. What think you? Curious pair to be

wagering. By the way, I think it probable we may have a battle royal over the theology school. The Vice-Chancellor talks about bringing in a statute to make it an arts school with all its examinerships free. This would be a rare gain, but it would be certain to be defeated in the first place at least."

"OXFORD,
"*May* 19, 1896.

"Now for some attempt at a record of events. I got home on Thursday, April 30, from Glasgow, found the college very much in need of my presence. But was called up to Town next day. We are to have a private conference with Lord Rosebery, quite a small number and confidentially, over the Education Bill and a few other things. There will be a small dinner at Albert Spicer's, where all sorts of questions will, I suppose, be discussed. On my return I found Principal Stewart, of St. Andrews, who stayed for a few days and preached very sensibly on Sunday. Next week I have to go to London in connection with the Welsh University. I am an examiner this year, and have also organised the first examination in the first Theological School. . . . By the way, in the *Speaker* of last Saturday you will find two articles by me—one on Froude, another on the Education Bill and the Scotch members. I see you think it dull; I well believe it: and only wish I had sent you weekly some gossipy paper. Another question which has come up to bother us is the old 'consecration of cemeteries.' We are in the midst of a regular clerical revival, and to arrest it will require all the power we can muster. We are fighting it stiffly. Last night I made my début before the Liberal three hundred, speaking on the Education Bill. We carried a resolution against it."

"OXFORD,
"*May* 26, 1896.

"Things are improving politically. The Tories are making a big mess of it. The Italian 'Green book' shows up Salisbury in no very creditable light. The old blue-blooded Tories, nay, even their thick and thin supporters, are going against the Education Bill, and

there is word that it will be withdrawn all but the financial clauses. Take it all in all, a more pitiable failure of a big majority has not been in my time. And this week the double victory at Frome and at Wick has put us all in good spirits."

"OXFORD,
"*June* 17, 1896.

"I've had rather a seedy time of it. My throat got worse by being used too much at our annual meetings, and it wasn't improved by my having to go up to London on Friday. But Spicer's dinner to Rosebery was a great success. I sat next to him. We had a good talk. He spoke well and has an eye for all the needs of the hour. He wants to get the party back to what it was before 1885, and if he has time will manage it. . . . The Tories are making a dreadful mess of it. Everything seems going wrong, home and foreign. They have had to call a meeting to get their men into order, and propose to hang up the Education Bill till January next. On one division their majority was reduced by half. All shows the great administrative power of their predecessors: were not the country bent on a policy of adventure, which means making money for speculative brokers, they would not be long in office. . . . But the Education Bill a rare fiasco? Who would have thought it would, after so large a second reading majority, be dropped like a hot potato? Their own side would have none of it: clerical domination won't go down even with the Tories. And so it has been thrown out. Everybody is now saying, What a clever lot the Liberals were to do so much with so small a majority, and what a soft-headed race these Tories are to do so little with all their huge numbers. It has put no end of heart into our people: they ought to accomplish something now, small and feeble as they are. If they only show fight they can prevent much mischief being done. On Sunday last we had several M.P.'s here. Prof. Stuart, Bayley, of Chesterfield, and Ellis. Everything showed how spirits had risen. Stuart said he had been feeling as if he had been living on champagne all week. Massie had Hudson, the Secretary of the Liberal Federation, staying with him. And he was as exalted as the others."

# CHAPTER X

## INDIA AND OTHER MATTERS

## 1898–1901

In the winter of 1898–9 Fairbairn visited India in order to deliver a series of lectures on the Haskell foundation. The Lectureship was established by a wealthy American lady, Mrs. Haskell, who founded the Chair of Comparative Religion at Chicago University, and provided funds in connection with the Chair to enable a lecturer to be sent out to India from time to time, in order to expound to the Eastern mind the philosophical ideas underlying the religion of the Western world. Fairbairn was the second lecturer on the foundation and the first to be appointed from a British University. The invitation came to him through President Harper, of Chicago, and was supported by between five and six hundred Indian missionaries. He regarded it as a veritable call, and one that he could not possibly decline. The task was one altogether after his own heart. He threw himself into it with the greatest zest and achieved a very notable success. In his studies in comparative religion it had always been the Indian religions which interested him most. Their underlying philosophy appealed to him, and he believed that there were certain affinities between them and Christianity the proper understanding of which might enable Christian teachers to present their case to the Indian mind with greater sympathy and attractiveness. It was such a task as this that he set himself to attempt. He felt that Christianity ought to be commended to the Hindus on its merits, and not as the faith of the conquering British

power. Only on philosophical terms could this be done, and in order to do it a man needed to understand the Eastern mind, and the faiths which represented it, as well as to know his Christianity. He was not without hope too that he might be able to do something towards helping Englishmen to a wiser estimate of the Indian problem, and of the people who were the key to its solution. At a dinner given in his honour by a number of personal friends just before he sailed, he spoke very modestly but very hopefully of this aspect of his task. He made it evident that his own sympathies were very strongly on the side of the natives, and that he was concerned to bring home to them the real meaning and implications of that faith which had meant so much to the Western world, and, as he believed, was so eminently adapted to the needs of the East.

Fairbairn sailed for India on the P. & O. s.s. *Egypt* in October, 1898. He was accompanied by Mrs. Fairbairn and his younger daughter Helen. As always, he proved an excellent traveller, and threw himself into the delights of the journey with the zest of a schoolboy. Of the voyage he wrote :

" To travel in a great liner is not to have a peaceful time, unless one isolates oneself. Yet it was a wonderful multitude, an epitome of Empire. The various classes were all there, high and low, rich and poor. Some travelling for health, others on business, children returning to their parents, and men coming back with their wives. All seemed to have the backward look towards home. India is not regarded as a colony, only a workshop or place of temporary sojourn."

Once in India, he quickly fell under its fascination. When his lectures were over he gave himself to sightseeing and worked through a long itinerary. At Calcutta Mrs. Fairbairn was taken ill, and this delayed him for a time. But when there was no further anxiety on her account, he set himself seriously to the business of trying

to find out as much about the country as he could. Starting from Bombay, where he had his first view of the East, "so Eastern that the fresh Western eyes that come to it fail to see its most significant features," he crossed over to Calcutta. There he first felt that rejuvenescence of the native spirit in religion "which was in its essence a reaction against the hard and grinding masterfulness of the British will." From Calcutta he climbed up to Darjeeling, and lived for five days within sight of the snows, "the grandest sight in all India." Thence to Benares, "the Athens and Mecca of India."

"From Benares," he writes, "we went through Allahabad to the cities and scenes made memorable by the Mutiny, and they kindled the imagination with the vision of the sufferings and the heroism of our own race. We watched and endured with the besieged in the Residency at Lucknow, and walked in the footsteps of the relieving column of Havelock and Outram. We followed the army that first rescued the besieged, and returned later to capture the city, now riding in the Staff with Colin Campbell or Frederick Roberts, now marching in the ranks with Forbes Mitchell. We saw the places of cruel massacre and death which will make the name of Cawnpore an undying pain to the memory of Britain. We explored the ridge at Delhi, and marvelled at the tenacity which, in spite of the summer heat and the Indian rains, stuck to a place which the winter's sun made hardly tolerable at midday. . . . We were too at the very focus of the collisions between the Hindu and the Mohammedan and between Mohammedan and Mohammedan; the very ground still seemed hot and trembling with the shock of battle."

From Delhi and Agra he passed on to Lahore.

"Lahore is but a step from Amritsar, and there one may study the interaction of the native and the newer English mind. The services in the Punjab can boast great deeds and great names, and still thrill to their touch; and here one can note the statesmanship of some of our Empire builders, men like John Lawrence and Charles Aitchison, of whom we have no need to be ashamed. And

the most considerable contribution to contemporary letters made by the Anglo-Indian community was made from Lahore ; and though Kipling is not a Thackeray, yet he is much more completely a product of his time and place, with a temper and imagination more characteristic of the Englishman who has lived with the services abroad, than of the Englisman who has been bred amid the humanities at home."

From Lahore he went on to Udaipur, which he found the best place in which to study the old order of Hindu society. Thence he turned southward to Madras, and paid flying visits to one or two other southern centres. Journeying thus he met with hosts of people, and put them all under contribution to satisfy his thirst for knowledge of the people, and especially of their religion. He stayed with missionaries of every denomination, preached in their churches both to natives and Europeans, attended conferences, and gave addresses. He stayed too with civilians, both merchants and Government officials. He met and talked with natives of every kind and degree, and impressed them one and all with his eager and sympathetic interest in their history, their religion, and their life.

The Haskell Lectures, which were the main object of his visit, he delivered in Calcutta, Bombay, and Madras. In each of these places six lectures formed the course ; but one or two lectures were also given in Lahore, Poona, Delhi, Benares, Allahabad and Lucknow. They were attended by large numbers of natives, mostly non-Christian, and were followed with keen and increasing interest. The subjects he dealt with were mainly as follows : (1) The Interpretation of Nature and the Creative Ideas of Religion ; (2) The Interpretation of Man and the Ideal of Religion ; (3) The Interpretation of Life and the Ultimate Ideas of Religion ; (4) The Origin and the Historical Development of Religion ; (5) The Historical Personality in Religion ; (6) The End of Religion. In his treatment he followed the lines of philosophical apologetic

which his books have made familiar, adapting it very skilfully to meet the special needs of his audiences, and illustrating it freely from Indian philosophy and religion. He made the whole argument culminate in a defence of Christianity as at once the religion most worthy of being regarded as a divine revelation, and most suited to the needs of men. He gives his own impression of the lectures at Calcutta in the following letter to his eldest son :

" The visit to Calcutta has been a great success so far as the lectures are concerned. The audiences were large, though the Press arrangements were beneath contempt. The reporters did not know how to report, or the editors to criticise. The natives showed immense interest. No such meetings either for numbers or influence have ever been known in Calcutta. And they were most wonderfully attentive. On the first night I was conscious of a serious conflict of feeling between the men and myself. The natives were restless, and moved uneasily, but I conquered, and while the audiences have grown the attention has deepened. When in the last two lectures I came to deal with Christian beliefs I expected the old disquiet ; but it did not return. The men heard with a quiet and patience which even a Christian congregation might have envied. One testimony was very remarkable. An orthodox Hindu, registrar of the University, expressed after the fourth lecture his surprise at never having heard the name of Jesus Christ mentioned. After the fifth he said, ' I never thought I could have sat to hear so much of Jesus Christ.' After the sixth, ' I feel that to be a very dangerous man. If he had continued longer, I would either have had to cease attending or cease to be a Hindu. As it is I have determined to read the New Testament.'

" On Friday night we were at a most delightful reception. The affair matched one's dreams of the ' gorgeous East.' The rooms were illuminated, a sort of throne seat was prepared for Helen and me. It had, of course, been also designed for your mother. The affair began by Hindus in native dress singing a welcome, set to native music, to us : then we had selections of native music on immense complicated instruments which yet emitted the

softest of sounds. The whole ended with an address of welcome to us and a reply from me. But this I am compelled to write out, as there were none capable of reporting. So you see these things involve labour.

"One thing has struck me so far—the distance between the native and the European communities. The officials did not appear at the lectures in great numbers, some eminent men did. Once we had the unwonted sight of three secretaries of Government on the platform. But society did not attend. For one thing the lectures were beyond the residence, in a quarter which society never visits; for another the hour was the time sacred to the drive and the outing after the labours of the office. I have visited a lot of schools and colleges, and am busy collecting information that may be of use in days to come."

If Fairbairn had reason to complain of the Press arrangements regarding his lectures in Calcutta, the reproach was soon removed. On the whole the newspapers treated him very well. The *Times of India* gave long and careful reports, and the native Press especially was very attentive and even cordial. Thoughtful Hindus recognised in him one who was something more than the ordinary apologist for the Christian faith. He was that, but they found in him at the same time a student of religions who had some claim to understand their own position, and who had a real sympathy with the ideas that underlay it, and with the history and literature in which it was expressed. They welcomed especially his earnest repudiation of that materialism which to them seemed so characteristic of English thought and life, and his plea for a more idealist point of view found a ready echo in their hearts. They appreciated the fact that he spoke as one who knew; and his many criticisms of their position left no sting because they were based on principles which they could themselves understand and appreciate. They were profoundly touched by the keen sympathy for them and their fellow-countrymen which the lecturer's whole attitude implied, and which frequently found expression in

his words. The following extracts from editorials in various Indian papers are typical of the comments which the lectures excited :

" If speech is character, Dr. Fairbairn's lectures undoubtedly bear witness to his intense moral earnestness. When he speaks his whole frame moves and thrills with the thoughts and emotions which he pours out with remarkable ease and exquisite felicity. We have given elsewhere our reasons for differing from him on some of the principal points on which he dwelt. But his lectures cannot fail to impress our fellow-countrymen by the moral fervour, the wide range of knowledge, the sincerity, toleration, and the faculty of eloquent expression which he brings to bear upon his work. Here is a Scotch theologian who has devoted his whole life to questions of the gravest import to mankind. It is an impressive sight to see him deliver his message with all the energy, sympathy, and earnestness which he can command to an alien people. It is one more illustration of that principle of unity which he traced in all human concerns in the midst of diversity and conflict. Can anyone who has heard even one of his lectures fairly say that his personality and his example have nothing to teach educated Indians ? We differ from some of his views, but we cannot but respect the man with a large heart who has realised the wondrous magic of love and sympathy, and the scholar whose moral and intellectual vision is bounded neither by an island nor even by states and empires."

" The subject of the first lecture was ' The Interpretation of Nature and the Creative Ideas of Religion.' People were simply enraptured with listening to this splendid oration. As we attentively heard it, it seemed to us that the opaque face or dial of Nature was opened and we were made to see its internal machinery of endless forces of Divine intelligence, which, like the wheels of a machine, was ever active. The real merit of a lecturer, we are told, is not so much in his ability to make a simple statement of facts, as in his power to appeal to the heart and conscience of his hearers with such an effect as to elevate their mind to a high pitch from which he sees, face to face as it were,

the truths he teaches. The statement that man is the maker and not the creation of Nature might at first sight have startled some, but the explanation given was most satisfactory. It reminded us of some of the Bakhayans of our Pradhanachyra, and sermons in Bengali and Brahmo-School lectures of our Minister, Keshub Chunder Sen."

"Apart from all religious controversies Principal Fairbairn is a scholar of profound learning, deep philosophic insight, and broad sympathies. The speech which he made in England in response to the toast proposed in his honour is conceived in a wholly different spirit from that which ordinarily pervades missionary criticism of alien religions. With all his learning, he is full of modesty and reverential feeling. Whether we accept his Christian doctrines or not, we cannot but offer a cordial welcome to a theologian and a thinker of his eminence. . . . Though Western philosophers have not yet furnished us with any better and clearer solutions of the ultimate problems of existence than were attained to centuries before Christ's appearance, there is much that we can learn from them in the field of critical, historical, and scientific methods of enquiry and criticism. Dr. Fairbairn comes to India with an established reputation; let us trust that he will be more successful in awakening the Indian intellect than his predecessor."

The naivety and frankness of these comments are very suggestive. They show that, for his Hindu hearers at any rate, Fairbairn struck and maintained the right note. He had long conversations with many of them, and learned a great deal that was new to him of their religion, and his willingness to learn as well as to teach did not a little to impress them in his favour. He was equally successful with the missionaries and with native Christians. Some of them were at first dismayed at the predominantly philosophical character of his lectures, but their fears and criticisms were allayed as the course proceeded, and they saw how he was all the time laying his foundations broad and deep that he might the more securely build the edifice

of his Christian apologetic. To quote one of the newspapers again :

" In some circles of professing Christians in Bombay, Dr. Fairbairn had been regarded with distrust, and his first lectures, which dealt with the most influential and formidable forms of error, and in which therefore Christianity or Christ had not been directly mentioned, had caused some impatient men to denounce him in public meetings ; but these critics were dumbfounded when he came to discourse particularly on Christianity, and boldly contrasted it with the ancient and modern systems of religious error, that the supreme claims of the former might be distinctly and forcibly seen."

After the lectures were over the Calcutta Missionary Conference passed the following resolution :

" The Calcutta Conference desire to put on record their high appreciation of the services rendered to the Mission cause by Dr. A. M. Fairbairn during his short visit to Calcutta in December last. He then delivered six lectures, which were eminently characterised by learning, eloquence, earnestness, and power ; by insight into human character, and knowledge of Hinduism and Mohammedanism, the prevailing religions of India ; by much judgment and tact in the presentation of the truth, by logical sequence of thought, lucidity of expression, and cogency of argument. Expression was given by many to the feeling that for an adequate treatment of the large subject taken up, more lectures were desirable, so that the lecturer might have the opportunity of leading his hearers more and more into the most vital differentiæ of Christianity. While the Conference would have been glad if Principal Fairbairn had remained longer in Calcutta, they desire to express their thanks to him for the feast he set before them, and more especially before the English educated young men of Calcutta, in the lectures he delivered. They would also record an expression of thanks for his addresses at the reception given by the Conference at their December monthly meeting, and at that given by the representatives of the various religious, Christian and non-Christian,

communities of Calcutta at the residence of Rajah Binaya Krishna, of Shava Bazar."

The following is the text of one of the addresses which he delivered at a reception given in his honour by native Christians. He spoke garlanded with flowers, after the charming Indian custom, a custom which he confessed caused him no little embarrassment, and did not make speech easy.

" Dearly beloved friends and fellow-Christians. This is a moment of deep tenderness to me. Seeing in you those made one in Jesus Christ, I have thought of the words of Christ, ' They shall come from the east and the west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.' We have ceased to be Englishmen, Indians, Parsees. We have simply become men and women in Christ Jesus. You have been pleased to allude to the service England has rendered to India. May I speak of what India has done for England ? It is a great thing for a people to be given an opportunity to help another people. England's duty is to bring the message of what has made England what she is. England was once a small island in the Roman Empire, but out of Rome came a power greater than that of the Empire. When the Empire went away and her power went away, faith in Christianity grew. It has been well said that what England has done of good to India she has done by the help of Christ. At first her people came as merchants to gain wealth, then as warriors to gain land. It was only as Carey came that a nobler spirit entered into her people and more tender relations, and we felt that the best gift was a knowledge of the gospel of Christ. I hope we all feel that in Jesus Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, but all are one. Christ knows no Brahmin, He knows no Sudra ; He knows no dark, He knows no white—no one as a man of wealth, no one as a man of poverty. We all belong to the family of God. Men have to pass through many struggles, and how hard it is to live out the ideal of this family ! We have to hold by the ears the wolf at the door. But did not Christ work ? Was He not the son of Joseph the carpenter ? There is nothing which England needs

to know so much as the inmost heart of India ; nothing that India needs to know so much as the inmost heart of England. How can you know it except by those who bring the message of love. You have been pleased to speak in your address of what is my special mission to India. I remember days when I tried to make out what your religions meant. I was in Scotland, but I seemed to think there was no beauty in nature, no joy in climbing the hillsides around me, because of the larger outlook over mankind. Those are years gone by, but precious still ; and if I have after many days come to India, it is with this great hope that the new faith has come to claim India. Let us try to create in the hearts of all a religion where distinctions cease, and there comes a union of spirit by harmony of love, which is the purpose of the life that is to come. I shall be glad if I can say anything to make our religion better understood, but I feel that I am but a wandering voice. It is the power of men who have given themselves to India for the love of it that will most be felt. When I remember Dr. Wilson, the integrity and the earnestness of that great man, I feel that the greatest gift possible to England is the men she sends. When I think of your educational institutions, do I not remember that it was through those who laid their foundations that they exist ; and when I see the extent of the progress made, do I not feel that the gospel message was never mightier than when hidden in a measure of meal, that it may leaven the whole lump ? I have great joy in seeing men of my blood helped by men of your blood in making known to the Indian race the gospel of Christ. I pray that the blessing of the eternal God may rest upon you now and for ever, until we all come to the stature of the perfect man Christ Jesus."

During his journeying in India Fairbairn kept an occasional and rather scanty diary, a few extracts from which may be given :

" November 24. Met Mr. Chandavarkhar : was very much impressed by him. He said the main need of Hinduism was social and domestic reform : the abolition of early marriages and enforced widowhood and the laws

of caste. Intermarriages should be made more possible, and the position of woman, which was the most serious hindrance to improvement, should be raised. Dr. Macmichan told me of the terms in which Lord Reay summed up his experience of India: 'Deification of the cow and the degradation of woman.' Mr. Chandavarkhar did not seem to think that religious reform was as necessary or possible as social, but recognised the necessity of making the worship do something to express higher ideas. One of his stories impressed me greatly. He complained of the sordid views of many Englishmen, their frank materialism and contempt for all that was not concerned in money-making. He told me that Mr. B., an English barrister, had, apropos of my visit, expressed disbelief in all spiritual methods of dealing with Hindus, and declared that his only aim here was to turn a stream of rupees towards his pocket so as to fill it. Mr. C. said, 'I am a loyal subject of the Queen, and rejoice to be it, but this not because of any belief in what you call your Empire or your commerce. The Phœnicians had commerce and the Babylonians had empire, but both perished. Where England excels these is in moral prestige, and if Britain were to lose that my loyalty would go, and thousands of Hindus agree with me.'"

"December 20. Calcutta: dined with Lieutenant-Governor Sir J. Woodburn, talked over many matters Indian, received an introduction to Rajah Bhinga, he considered education in India too utilitarian.

"21st. Had interview with Viceroy: talk general and educational: gave reminiscences of Burma: had not interfered with education, but believed it was as Sir J. W. said. Visited Bishop's College, found it exclusively Christian, but could get no special light on the advantages of this."

"December 22–26. Benares. Stayed with Miss Marris at L.M.S. Enjoyed gracious hospitality. Arrived and found M. waiting: does not care for Hindus or the work here. Was visited early by two Hindus more enlightened than some. Their names were Lala Baij Nath and Sris Chandra Bose. . . . We talked over the problems of Indian religion: found them profoundly

convinced that the Bhagavagita was the revelation of Indian faith, Christian and more than Christian in its theory of inspiration. Evident that Christianity has caused extraordinary development of interest both in the theory and idea of Incarnation, and in the idea of a Hinduism independent of caste, more ethical and less under the bondage of ceremonial. Both men were anxious to find why I should hold Christ to be the only incarnation of God, when they were ready to recognise Him as well as Krishna and Buddha."

"Visited Rajah Bhinga, a very beautiful character; was much impressed with his reverence and spiritual tone. His story was tragic. Had been in I.C.S., a very distinguished and capable man; but his eldest son committed suicide. The shock so threw him off his balance that he surrendered the world and retired into private contemplation. Has become a genuine recluse, a fine type of the surrender of all things for the sake of the soul. We talked of renunciation of the world in Christianity and Hinduism. He thought our finest characters had been our recluses: this was our point of affinity: he would not allow Hinduism to be without ethical value; if in obedience to it all was surrendered—that was ethical. I was particularly touched by his saying to me as we left, 'I have attained peace, peace, peace,' and he seemed to bless one as only a saint can."

"December 30–January 4, 1899. Agra, with Dr. Valentine. Delightful house and striking work. Saw missionary students, mainly sons of catechists and native pastors, but two striking converts. Had on afternoon of 31st interesting conversations with Mohammedans and Hindus. They regretted that education was a mere matter of bread and butter, a condition of service and as such followed. Asked if there was any zeal for education on the part of the natives. Yes, especially the Hindus. Mohammedans were more averse as more exclusive in religion. Here is a problem. Hindus do not feel conflict with religion, for religion to them is caste and observance. But to the Mohammedan it involves instruction. How should the higher religion be more adverse to education than the lower?"

"Both Valentine and Miss Thorn agreed on one point, mischievous influence of Mohammedanism on sex relations. Their greed for women compelled Hindus to place their women under purdah; were made jealous for fate of wives and daughters; had therefore affected the character of women on both sides. On the whole Hindu women better: marriage relation more assured and sacred; Mohammedan women suffer from insecurity of tenure; the moral standard lower."

"Three Moslems remained behind to ask concerning revelation; how could the New Testament be a revelation when so much was history? Evidently they believed the word must be authoritative; could not admit anyone had prerogative of prophecy save Mohammed; he alone was made and destined for the work."

"The men were most ready for political conversation; national and racial feeling strong; clear that Hindu and Mohammedan are here agreed; one said, 'Our only comfort is belief in a real English heart behind the official.'"

"January 9–10, Amritsar. Guest of Mr. Wade, C.M.S., a very efficient mission; spoke in the evening to Christian workers. Visited schools and hospital, where met Dr. Henry Clarke; does most excellent work. He showed me the Golden Temple, full of interest. Religion as a combination of Islam and Hinduism. The Book treated as alive, put to bed, waked, conducted in procession to its home; in the temple during the day, regarded as a living person, a perfected Guru, a portion of it was read while we were there, all reverent and silent during the reading. But the whole was made to celebrate the praises of a living God who speaks in his word. A curious union of Mohammedan reverence for the word with Hindu belief in the visible thing as very God."

"January 10–17. With Col. Montgomery and the Dunlop Smiths at Lahore. Saw much to interest. Met representatives of Arya and Brahma Somaj. Points raised: (*a*) the distinction between the two, the question of authority, the Vedas and transmigration. Interesting to find an attempt to restrict Veda to a single point, viz. its literary value. Its geographical distribution signi-

ficant. Less emphasis on Bhagavagita, more on the hymns. But again I was struck with the want of first-hand knowledge. (*b*) Rise of Mohammedanism, how far coincident with decay of Buddhism? How explain the fact that such strength of conviction came through coercion? Attempt made to resolve all into forced violation of caste. (*c*) The degree in which Christianity has modified Hinduism; its greater susceptibility as compared with Mohammedanism. The exclusive and inclusive faith. The faith which grows out of and into a philosophy compared with the faith which comes of authority. The one received, the other evolved."

"January 20–24. Udaipur. One of the loveliest places visited. Extraordinary interest both of place and man. Rajah remains a priest, officiates on certain occasions, is worshipped as divine. But illness here prevented full profit of the place. Saw most to admire in Shepherd; he one of the finest specimens of missionary I had met in India."

"January 31–February 9. At Madras. Here large meetings. A strange change from the north. Concentration on the Bhagavagita. More intensity of belief in mystic philosophy. Struck here and at Poonah with complete indifference as regards custom and ceremonial; left to the people, as distinguished from philosophy and observance of caste custom which is reserved for the Brahmins."

These extracts will serve to show the spirit and temper in which Fairbairn set himself to study the conditions of life and thought in India. He had an eye for everything that was beautiful and noteworthy in buildings, scenery, native customs, and the like. But his real interest was in the religions of the people old and new, in Hinduism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and their relations, and in the impact upon all of them of Christian propaganda. Hitherto his knowledge of the distinctive religions of India had been derived from books and the sacred writings, and we may say that he had learnt as much of them as was possible to any man with only these sources at his disposal. Now he was brought face to face with them

as a living cult, and this contact with reality at once illuminated and perplexed him. As he wrote of himself later: [1] "It was not so much that his knowledge was incorrect or false, as that it was mistaken in its emphasis. No religion can be known in its sacred books alone, or simply through its speculative thinkers and religious reformers; and of all religions the one that these can least interpret is the encyclopædic aggregation of cults and customs we know as Hinduism. Hence he realised as he had never done before the force of custom and usage, of social convention and religious observance, the didactic and coercive power of a worship which can command obedience where its value is doubted, or even where it is denied and despised. He saw a religion which had an innumerable multitude of deities and an indescribable variety of worships; which had grown out of a simple and primitive naturalism that had no knowledge of these gods and rites; which had had hosts of reformers who had yet only added to the mythologies and cults they had set out to purge and reform; and which still, amid so many changes, was conceived and described as one religion, and as continuous with that of the ancient Aryan men."

The following impression of Fairbairn's visit is given by Lieut.-Col. Sir J. R. Dunlop Smith:

"Dr. Fairbairn stayed with me at Lahore for a week in January, 1899, and we had several talks about Indian administration, Indian religions, and Indian problems generally. He delivered two lectures at Lahore. He had very full audiences, containing the majority of the educated Indians in Lahore, several advanced students, and many of the English residents. He had evidently made a close study of the religions of India, and his detached philosophic spirit and his sympathetic treatment of religions other than his own made a strong impression on the Indians who heard him.

[1] Preface to *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. viii.

"It is so long ago that I cannot remember the details of the conversations I had with him on various subjects. But I remember some of his talk. He once said that while the different services in India represented—and worthily represented—the force and power of England, the several Christian missions and churches stood for the duty of England to India. He also referred more than once to the great interest he felt in examining the practical working of the local religions on the spot. He admitted it was possible to study any religion philosophically and fairly accurately from a distance, but such study must necessarily be confined to its intellectual side. To get a full view of its practical working and of its influence on its professors it was necessary to study it in the land of its being. I remember also being struck by his insistence that, although to outward seeming India lived mainly in and on its past, there was then actively at work the force of new and powerful factors."

On his return to England Fairbairn published two articles in the *Contemporary Review*[1] giving an account of his Indian experiences. The first was an extremely interesting and vividly written impression of the country and his travels, and the second, which was written first as a paper to be read before the Oxford Society of Historical Theology, was a highly technical study of the religions of the country in the light of his investigations. Just at this time his book on the *Philosophy of the Christian Religion* was passing through the Press. It is entirely characteristic of him that he should have held it up for some months, in order that he might correct and amplify certain parts of it in view of the new knowledge which he had obtained of the religions of India.

During his absence work at the college had been carried on as usual under the careful guidance of Dr. Massie as acting Principal. He was loyally supported by the staff of the college, and further help was obtained from outside sources. Dr. A. E. Garvie

[1] For June and August, 1899.

gave a course of twelve lectures on the "Theology of Ritschl," and Principal Salmond, of the Free Church College, Aberdeen, gave six lectures on "The Doctrine of the Atonement in the New Testament and in Theology." In addition to these, college pastors were appointed who lectured from time to time on pastoral theology. Among these were Revs. H. Arnold Thomas, of Bristol, C. Silvester Horne, of London, and Dr. Mackennal, the Chairman of the College Council. Though his place was thus well filled, Fairbairn received an eager welcome home. The students greeted him in their own way, described by one of their number as follows :

"This is what we did. We met the carriage at the gates. The horse was taken out, and ropes were attached to the carriage. At a given signal the quad was brilliantly illuminated by Bengal lights, which flashed from the Doctor's house, the tower, the turret, and the south-west corner of the chapel. Each man was provided with a torch, and these also were lit. Then we went in procession twice round the quad, and finally landed the Doctor and his party safely at the steps of the house. By this time the torches were all blazing merrily, and we stood cheering lustily and singing 'For he's a jolly good fellow.' The Doctor was evidently much moved, and could not speak to us. We too could scarcely speak, but managed to tell him, by our enthusiasm mainly, that we were very glad to see him back again. Our next move was to the centre of the grass plot, where we, arrayed in academicals and still bearing our torches, formed a ring and danced round another Bengal light to the tune of 'Auld Lang Syne.' Then we formed a fire of our torches on the gravel, and continued to be merry. A lull, probably caused by exhaustion, allowed us to hear the Doctor's voice from the steps, wishing us 'Good night, men.' We went across to the steps again and sang 'Home, sweet Home.' Thus we greeted the Doctor and those with him on their return, and endeavoured in student fashion to express the joy of sons welcoming him who is to us, in a very real sense, a father."

This welcome was continued at the annual meetings of the council and constituents of the college held in the following June. The occasion was very fitly marked by the unveiling of a fine portrait of the first Principal, which had been painted by his old friend and fellow-countryman, Sir George Reid, the President of the Scottish Academy. The presentation of the picture to the college was made by the treasurer, Mr. Albert Spicer, Mr. Abraham Haworth, and Dr. Mackennal, in terms which reflected the appreciation and gratitude with which Fairbairn's work for the college and the churches was regarded by those who knew it best.

A few months after his return from India Fairbairn again crossed the Atlantic, in order to attend the meetings of the International Congregational Council at Boston. He sailed in the *Oceanic*, then the greatest of the White Star liners, and on her maiden voyage. Along with him was a little company of delegates to the Council, including Dr. Mackennal, Dr. Forsyth, Mr. Norman Smith, Bursar of Mansfield, Mr. Wm. Crosfield, of Liverpool, and others. Fairbairn was much the most energetic of the party. He spent hours each day tramping round the upper deck, and calculating the miles he walked. He talked incessantly, and was full of life and laughter, and with it all managed to read an inordinate number of novels. At the Council his most important contribution was an address on "The Influence of the Study of Other Religions on Christian Theology." His treatment of the subject naturally showed marked traces of his Indian experience, and the address as a whole is perhaps the clearest and best statement available of his views as to the scope and effects of the study of comparative religion. He believed profoundly in its positive and apologetic value as the following brief quotations will show:

"A study of religions which is intended only to be an apology for our own, will educate no theologian, conserve and enlarge no theology. The student who goes to other

faiths simply to find out what is evil in them, in order that he may compare it with the idealised good he professes to find in his own, will come back worse than empty-handed."

" The most general effect which the comparative study of religion tends to have on theology is in broadening and, as it were, humanising the thought on which theology builds. Our apologetic has been too critical and defensive, and has suffered from the want of positive and constructive ideas."

" As a comparative science the study of religions may fulfil a direct and immediate apologetic purpose. It may become a finger-post indicating the religion which experience has proved to be in structure and ideal the highest. The thing the study makes evident at the outset is the necessity of religion to man ; it does not lie in his choice to be without it ; it holds him in spite of himself."

" The study of religions has also enlarged the conception of religion, and made evident the unity of its several parts. It has made it impossible to think of theology in isolation from worship and polity, institutions and conduct. The thought of a religion is as much expressed in the behaviour as in the speech of its votaries, as much in the customs it sanctions, the laws it enacts, the ritual it observes, the practices it follows, and the social or class distinctions it approves and maintains, as in the creed it subscribes or in the confession of faith it makes. But it is in the interpretation of the highest religious beliefs that the most decisive influence has been exercised. There is a remarkable difference between an idea regarded as a religious belief and as an intellectual conception. This difference relates, not so much to the greater note of conviction which marks the religious belief, as to the greater reality which belongs to it, and the immediacy with which it bears on life. Religion in dealing with its beliefs has an audacity and a vigour of logic quite unknown to philosophy ; and this is the more emphasised by its logic being expressed even more in conduct and character, in action and institutions than in dialectic."

Fairbairn was the most notable of the English delegates to the Boston Council. He preached the official sermon, and spoke at several of the sessions. It was pleasant to see the unbounded affection and admiration with which the Americans regarded him. His theology was not altogether theirs, and they confessed that they often found him difficult to understand. But they listened eagerly to his words, and made him very much at home amongst them.

In this same year (1899) his book, *Catholicism, Roman and Anglican*, appeared. It consisted, as we have seen, of a number of articles reprinted from the *Contemporary Review*, and, like his other books, passed rapidly through several editions. It was marked by a strongly anti-sacerdotal bias, of the genesis of which he gives, in one of his American addresses, the following very interesting account:

"Years before I had occasion to study the priesthood in the Anglican or the Roman Church, I had tried to understand its rise, its character and action in the religion and history of India. I had there endeavoured, as an earnest, but I hope dispassionate and critical student of religions, to read the forces which had governed the destinies of a people, organised its society, determined the forms of its worship and the modes of its thought, and had regulated the evolution of its ethics and its conduct, and it seemed to me as if the most potent of those forces was the sacerdotal and sacrosanct claim embodied in the Brahmin family. To have seen what the priesthood had done in one country and for one religion was to have one's eyes opened to it in other lands and religions, to be compelled to study both its generic and its specific qualities, to analyse its roots and reasons, its effects on character, on society, on thought and conduct wherever it rose to power. And it was from the priesthood of India that I came to the priesthoods of Europe, and came not with a fixed judgment as to their identity in tendency and idea, —that would have been the act of a fanatic or a partisan, not of a student and inquirer—but with a standpoint

from which to view them, a method of research as to their rise and growth, their history and claims, and a habit of analysis which forced one to examine their antecedents, their consequences, and their action on Church and State, on Christian thought and institutions, on conduct and worship, personal and collective."

The book met with a more mixed reception than any other of Fairbairn's writings. It was, of course, frankly controversial in tone, and when he had to hit Fairbairn generally hit hard. Anglican reviewers freely recognised its power and its learning, but they could not be expected to agree with its conclusions, and they resented what seemed to them to be its *ex cathedra* tone. It may be granted that on the question at issue between Anglo-Catholics and Nonconformists Fairbairn was apt to speak always as sharply and decidedly as he felt. His training and temperament made it unusually difficult for him to see things with their eyes, and though he was never intentionally unjust, it is not to be wondered at that his opponents sometimes thought him so. On the other hand, Evangelicals of all churches welcomed his work as that of a champion indeed. It put their case with a clearness and cogency, and a wealth of historical argument and illustration, that seemed to them to make it almost irresistible. As usual the reviewers answered one another, for it is the bane of all writing upon such subjects that men will not judge dispassionately and apart from their preconceived views. It should be remembered too that Fairbairn never quite shared the attitude of the average English Nonconformists towards the Anglican Church. The iron had not entered into his soul in the same way as it had into theirs, and his position was even more independent and critical. When he was asked on one occasion to write as the exponent of Nonconformist views he replied :

"The word (Nonconformist) is one I do not like, for it is foolish and insolent, the symbol of civil intrusion into a sphere too high for it. For the first and most

formative half of my life I lived in a country where the Episcopal was the Nonconformist Church, and its clergymen the Dissenters, though I think we were too courteous and too brotherly to use terms of civil coinage to describe spiritual convictions; but early beliefs are very persistent, and the geographical change has not effected any change in the connotation which the terms 'Nonconformist' and 'Dissenter' have in my mind. I am therefore the very last person who ought to try to speak on behalf of the multitudes who so conceive themselves, or who allow themselves to be so conceived."

The opening of the year 1900 found the country plunged into the darkest period of the South African War. For religious people it was a time of indecision and of much searching of heart. To speak against the war or the policy which had led up to it, was to incur instant unpopularity, and to write oneself down a pro-Boer, an almost unspeakable term of reproach. The Liberal party was at its lowest ebb, and, in spite of the disasters which marked the opening of the conflict, the whole country was burning with a Jingo fever which was as infectious as it was violent. As a rule Fairbairn took no part in general political work. His letters show that he felt strongly, however, and he was a thorough-going supporter of the Liberals. And when the occasion offered he was quite ready to speak his mind. An invitation from the editor of the *Speaker* early in 1900 brought forth an article on "The Religious Conscience and the War," which deserves more than a passing notice. It was but a brief word, but it expressed in unmistakable terms what many good men were then thinking, and what most people have come to think now. There is a restrained sadness about it that shows how deeply feeling was stirred, and a fearless application of principle in a region where hitherto passion had ruled. He wrote:

"I have no abstract hatred of war. It is not good, but there are worse things in the world. It may be,

as the Chinese sage said, the weapon of the inferior person, hated and avoided of the wise; but there are occasions when the wise man would prove himself a fool or a knave if he shunned it. I have in me the blood of men who fought and died for religion, and I have not seldom wished it had been granted to me to do the same. The boy who has been nursed on the ballads of the Scottish border knows what it is to have in him the passion for the feud, the foray and the stricken field. But all the more, his notion of war may be too grim and too high to allow him to think of it as other than a last necessity, which a people may endure rather than lose its freedom or suffer an intolerable wrong, but which a State in the very measure of its strength and integrity and pride will be slow to seek and anxious to avoid. Now, was this war a moral and a mortal necessity for our English State? Did we go into it with clean hands, like a strong people, conscious of its own rectitude, resolved to be chivalrous and scrupulous against giving offence or awakening self-respectful suspicion in a weaker people, who had proved their love of freedom by acts and sacrifices we, at least, ought to have been forward to recognise? I do not ask these questions as a politician, for a politician in the English sense of a man who sides with a party and takes part in its strifes I am not and never have been; but I ask them as a citizen of the English State who has tried to look at civil questions from the standpoint of the religion he believes and attempts to teach."

"But now when our policy and opportunity have come, what have we done? The Boers may be rude and intolerant, but at any rate they so loved freedom that they wandered into the wilderness rather than struggle with us on the soil which they had, by the labour and sweat of generations, made their own. And when some men of our race and blood, trading on the fair name of England, tried to raid their territories and steal their freedom, what did we do? Did we gravely and seriously deal with the offence as a wrong to a sister State, with all the greater a claim on our consideration that it was so much weaker than ourselves? Did we not rather, by the mouth of our most responsible Minister,

declare that the man who had been, by a Committee of our own Parliament, found most seriously to blame, had done nothing unbecoming an honourable statesman? How this affected a distinguished Englishman who supported the party of the Minister may be read in Mr. Lecky's latest book. But if it so affected an English politician, who was a scholar and a gentleman, how must it have affected the State which suffered from the wrong that England had not the courage to redress? Were we within our rights in asking the Boers to redress the grievances of foreigners while we ourselves left theirs unredressed?"

Writing of this kind was then but as a voice crying in the wilderness. It was prophetic, however, and thoroughly justified by the event. More than a year later, when the war was drawing to a close, and public opinion had greatly changed, Fairbairn wrote another article in the *Westminster Gazette*, in which he pleaded for a really Liberal settlement in South Africa. He was greatly distressed by the dissensions in which the Liberal party of those days was involved. He was friendly both with Lord Rosebery and with Sir H. Campbell-Bannerman, and though he did not believe in hushing up differences, he felt that the time had come when personal feeling should give way before the necessity of asserting and maintaining the historic principles of Liberalism. Fairbairn was no Imperialist, in the ordinary sense of that word, but he had a profound belief in the work and destiny of the British people, and did not hesitate to say that the forms in which this was being embodied were the creation of the Liberal spirit. He wrote:

"The expansion of what it is the fashion to call 'our Empire' has been due to the action of Liberal ideas, and is in the main the achievement of Liberal policy. Any decrease, therefore, in their energy or in the strength with which they are held, and the force and the faith with which they are applied, can only mean disaster to our people and State. No Empire—if we must call the

reign of our people by so unsuitable a name—was ever so much the creation of a race and so little the product of anything that can be called by any name implying either centralised or individualised power, either military force or military ambition. It has been due throughout to the wholesome and natural action of great ideas working through the plastic medium of resolute yet susceptible men."

These ideas so mediated, Fairbairn urged, would be necessary to any real settlement in South Africa. He continues :

" But how is peace to be established ? The supremacy of our arms has been proved, and with it our power to hold South Africa by force, for the present at least. What we desire is the recognition of this power in order that laws promotive of order and freedom may be established. These are the substantial things, and a far-seeing statesman would say, ' If they are secured the fruits of our victory will be garnered.' But we have discovered that, however easy it may be to provoke war, it is an almost impossible thing to assuage the passions it has aroused, or to make the voice of reason heard above their strife.

" Well, then, let us frankly face this fact, that it is not enough to discuss terms of peace at home amongst ourselves, or even to offer them to the Boers, but that it depends even more on the men who offer the terms than on the terms they offer. Where men deeply distrust, it is certain that the fairest offer will be viewed with suspicion ; indeed, the fairer the offer the greater the suspicion will be. And have the men who speak in our name given the Boers no cause for suspicion ? Let us forget all questions as to the origin, the justice, and the necessity of the war, and ask a question which is perfectly concrete : Are we satisfied with the men who are responsible for its policy and the action in which it is expected to issue ? Do we trust them either as regards what they are doing or what they propose to do ? We may, indeed, as Liberals differ as to means, but there is, professedly at least, agreement as to ends. We all love peace and desire

it. The honour, the well-being of the peoples we govern, the character and dignity of England, the happiness and the prosperity of her daughter colonies and her varied dependencies, are primary objects with us all. But this agreement as to ends ought to make us seek some point where we may agree as to means. And what have the means actually followed accomplished? England has not for more than a century suffered as heavily as she is doing to-day in reputation, in purse, and in the persons of sons whose lives and services she can ill spare; and no loss was ever more evidently due to lack of statesmanship. It is but to repeat an oft-told tale to say that the time the war was to occupy, the expenditure it was to involve, the forms and the scale it was to assume, the questions it was to raise, the enmities and confusions it was to produce—in a word, all the immense calamities it was to bring in its train—were unforeseen, and so unforetold, by those whose clear duty it was to foresee and forewarn before letting loose the dogs of war. It may be that we are doggedly determined to see this thing through—though we here protest too much if we wish to be taken seriously; but dogged determination is simple obstinacy, and obstinacy is so blind as to be nearer the quality of brute passion than of rational strength."

The article closes with a very definite and pointed appeal from the purely party standpoint that all Liberals should unite in order to bring about a change of Government. Fairbairn argued that it was practically impossible for the promoters of the war to secure that confidence on which alone a lasting peace could be founded. He believed that this was the task of the Liberals, and that if they would gird themselves to it, they had at least a favourable prospect of success. Again the event proved that he was right in his forecast.

In the year 1900 peace had its victories as well as war. For some time past negotiations for union had been going on between the United Presbyterians and the Free Church of Scotland. In this year the negotiations were brought to a successful issue, and the union was consummated.

Fairbairn was a delegate from England to the first Assembly of the United Free Church, and delivered a long and fervent address, describing the splendid history of the Scotch Churches with great amplitude of detail. No man present on that occasion could speak on the subject with a more intimate knowledge, or with a keener and more sympathetic interest. It took him back to the hole of the pit out of which he had himself been digged, and carried him over sacred and familiar ground. As he recalled the early struggles for freedom, the work of the Seceders, the rivalry between Burghers and anti-Burghers, the voluntary controversy, and the long roll of great names from the Erskines to Chalmers, and beyond him to the present time, there came a glow and passion into his speech that carried all before it. He was very anxious too to explain the whole story to the English public, whose ignorance of and indifference to Scottish ecclesiastical questions seemed to him always a strange and most unworthy thing. He wrote much on the subject, but two articles stand out as of especial interest ; one in the *Speaker* on " The United Free Church of Scotland," and the other in the *Contemporary* on " The Scottish Church and the Scottish People." We quote from the former his account of the relations of English and Scottish Presbyterianism and the beginnings of the Secession.

" The passion for uniformity is not native to Presbytery, though it has been a dominant note of its Scottish type. The English variety neither loved nor desired it, and only at one dismal moment, when fascinated and made fey by the dour Scottish mind, tried to enforce it. The Westminster Confession, though drawn up in England, was thought out and realised in Scotland. What Athanasius was to Nicæa, that the Scottish delegates were to the Westminster Assembly ; and so their Confession had an entirely different meaning to the Southern from what it had to the Northern Presby-

terians. The southerner viewed it as declaratory; the northerner turned it into a statutory and legal document. Anthony Tuckney, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, tells us that he gave his vote that the Confession 'should not bee eyther swoorn or subscribed to,' for, as he quaintly says, 'we had been burned in the hand in that kind before'; that is, he meant it to be an expression of the mind of the Church as it then was, but not a law to be forced on the clergy and the governing laity as the faith of the Church in all coming times. And so English Presbytery was broader, more varied, and more elastic than Scottish; but while the Scots freely made the Confession their law in theology and the Church, various things for which they were not responsible tended to make their obedience to it more rigorous and their use of it as a means of discipline more severe. The Scot is a person capable of conversion, though it may need a teacher of signal logical capacity to convert him; but he is quite incapable of being converted by any form of physical, political, or ecclesiastical force. The attempt which the Stuarts made to dragoon him out of Presbytery into Episcopacy made him a much more fanatical Presbyterian."

"And so out of the Stuart dragonnades came the passion of the Scottish people for their own Church polity, and the relentless rigour of the logic which made its minutest details as vital as its more commanding principles. Patriotism accomplishes its work not by law or by discipline, but by personal endurance; and so the people who had suffered most were most inclined to magnify the faith and the polity for which they had suffered. The Revolution of 1688 brought them but partial contentment; still they had their own Church organised in their own way, though not so organised as it would have been had there been no secular State and no sister kingdom. In 1712 the influence of England made itself disagreeably manifest in the Law of Patronage. That law was absolutely opposed to the genius of Presbytery; it was resisted strenuously by the sons of the Scottish Church who had suffered most in her cause, and had done most to effect the change which had given to both countries

command over their own destinies. But the Court and the Parliament were too strong for the Church, and patronage became law. The individual congregation had to accept as minister the man the patron presented. But the dour race that had fought for the Covenant was not to be cajoled by an astute or legal patron. Hence came disputed settlements, resistance to the patron's will, refusal to accept his nominee, with the corresponding action of the authority that must enforce the law. It was no uncommon thing to have a whole congregation resist an incumbent, and to have the incumbent settled at the point of the bayonet. Matters were carried out with a high hand on the one side, and met by sullen resistance on the other. Protests were made by the more independent of the clergy; but the Assembly of the Church felt bound to stand by the law. The grounds of protest were stated in a notable sermon preached by Ebenezer Erskine before the synod of Stirling. It insisted that a twofold call—that of God and of His Church—was necessary to make a man a minister. The call of the Church was said to lie in 'the free choice and election of the Christian people;' for it was not to patrons, heritors, or any other set of men, but to the Church that apostles, evangelists, pastors, and teachers were given. That sermon was preached in 1732; in 1733 the Assembly condemned the recalcitrancy of the preacher; he would not submit, the Assembly could not recede, and as a result the Secession Church was formed, only four ministers joining in this decisive step."

The article in the *Contemporary* deals with the same subject as that in the *Speaker*, but is written at greater length and with more exactness of detail. Every page of it shows the loving care which Fairbairn lavished upon all things Scotch, and his admiration for the strong and simple religious faith which had played so great a part in their history. His whole attitude to religion in England and especially to the Anglican Church is hardly intelligible, save in the light of the fact that he never ceased to regard himself as a stranger in a strange land, and to go back in thought and devotion to the more than Puritan principles

in which he had been reared. The history and folklore and religious life and quaint mentality of the Scottish people were with him never-ending themes of conversation. He defended the people and their ways against all comers, and was never so happy as when paying them tribute. The expression of his own personal religion was always influenced by the forms familiar to him in his early days. At family prayers and in the devotions in the College Chapel this was very beautifully manifest, and he was himself always conscious of the debt he owed to the simple piety and strong religious instinct of his fathers in the faith. Something of his feeling may be gathered from the account he gave of his forbears in the Secession Church.

"I could have liked to tell the true tale of the Seceders, Burgher and anti-Burgher, New Light and Old Light; for with them lies the genuine romance of Scottish religion in the eighteenth century. They were unlike in mind, in temper, and in character to the Moderates, yet they were all the more typical of their home. In their ministry they had men of learning, though it was very unlike the learning of the Moderates; less humane and more scholastic, less classical and more theological, the learning of men who were in grim earnest about the verities of their faith. Yet they were often men of a most excellent humour. It is curious that the raciest and most genial tales of the pulpit and the manse relate to men of Seceder stock. They also in a peculiar degree evoked the imagination latent in the peasantry, and drew from the cottage and the farm into literature men that, but for them, would have remained unknown and inarticulate. Thomas Carlyle has testified how much he owed to the Burgher minister of Ecclefechan—"the priestliest man in ecclesiastical guise he had ever known." Another of their ministers supplied Scott with the ideal he embodied in the Josiah Cargill of *St. Ronan's Well*. From the ranks of the humblest peasantry they called forth a family that, in the four generations of its existence, represented successively all that was best in the learning, the

pulpit eloquence, and the literature of the people of Scotland ; the family whose widest known representative is the author of *Rab and his Friends*. But as one who, in his day, has known how to make merry over the oddities and the exacting conscientiousness of the Seceders, I should like to do something here towards making the inner side of their character intelligible, and this may best be done through a personal reminiscence. My first charge was of a church which was a lineal descendant of the first Seceder congregation formed south of the Forth. In it there was an old man, massive, picturesque, with a grand head, beetling eyebrows, shaggy grey hair, and a voice that even in his age had a sound as of the sea. When he came to die—an old man over ninety—I expressed in the conventional way of the young parson, the hope that he was willing to depart. 'No,' he said, 'I am not.' 'Why?' 'I would like to live to see the doonfa' o' antichrist.' And antichrist meant for him the connection of Church and State. One had to know his memories to understand why it had for him so tragical a significance. The congregation took its rise from one of the oldest and cruellest of the enforced settlements ; the people left the Church they loved rather than have the majesty of God mocked by being at the mercy of one in whose fitness to represent them in worship they did not believe. For years they had no place wherein to meet, and they met in the open air on the bleak hillside ; and the old man could remember hearing the elders of his youth tell how they had sat in the wild wintry weather in the most sheltered nook they could find, with their bonnets about their feet and their plaids drawn round their heads to keep them warm amid the drifting snow, while they listened to the word they loved spoken by the man they trusted. These memories explained the strength of the man's feeling, and gave point to his desire to live even to a greater age than he had reached, that he might see antichrist fall from his proud seat."[1]

In the year 1900 a little book was written by a number of residents in Oxford in order that the profits from it

[1] *Contemporary Review*, January, 1901, p. 146.

might help the fund then being raised for the sick and wounded soldiers in South Africa. It was entitled *Some Oxford Pets*, and was edited by Mrs. Wallace. Fairbairn, always a great dog lover, made a very charming and characteristic contribution to it under the heading, "Two Dons." These were two favourite dogs each of them "named from the district whence he had come, though 'dons' are not unknown in the place where they lived their comfortable lives." The first of them "was a most agreeable companion, for he did not wander from the straight path or fall into unseemly feuds or get himself noticed by dogs of baser degree. . . . He did indeed occasionally relax and condescend to be hilarious. The time he chose for such indulgences was characteristic: it was when a number of undergraduates were enjoying afternoon tea. Then Don, with a joyous bark, would commence a chase after his tail, seize it, and continue his gyrations till exhausted nature compelled him to stop. We never understood the philosophy of this procedure till a friend discovered it: he was anxious to show the undergraduates how to make both ends meet."

His successor, the second Don, was a dog irreproachable in descent and perfect in appearance, but "he seemed to have some deficiency in brain. He either would not or could not learn as the other had done. He never walked out without getting into trouble and bringing trouble on the unfortunate people who had him in charge. . . . When we were away in India, Don, sadly missing the restraint of a master's hand, got into the way of wandering and losing himself: and so we had to part with him, giving him away to friends, who have been kind and attentive to the dear dog, though occasionally, they say, he still plays his old part of vagrant."

To turn to more serious matters. In the year 1899 Mrs. Rylands, of Manchester, built and endowed the now famous John Rylands' Library in memory of her husband. She was an old and close friend of Fairbairn's, and he was

consulted at every stage of the enterprise. At his suggestion the work of designing the library was entrusted to Mr. Basil Champneys, the architect of Mansfield, who produced a building entirely worthy of the splendid collection of books it was destined to house. This included the famous Althorp library, which Mrs. Rylands had purchased from Earl Spencer and presented to the city of Manchester, as well as some 30,000 other volumes, many of them rarities. The story goes that when the time came to open the building the city fathers were of the opinion that some Royal personage should be asked down for the purpose. But Mrs. Rylands thought otherwise and would have no one but Dr. Fairbairn. He delivered the inaugural address, in which he paid a fine tribute to the great merchant whose name the library was to bear, and to the pious care and devotion of the widow whose work it was. He then continued :

" The opening of this great library calls for national jubilation. All citizens who desire to see England illumined, reasonable, right, will rejoice that there came into the heart of one who inherited the wealth of this great Manchester merchant the desire to create for him so seemly a monument as this. But these features taken alone would not make this library an appropriate monument of John Rylands. He loved literature, and he cultivated it to the extent of his opportunity. But he was far more eminently a man of religion than a man of letters. By education and conviction and lifelong association he was a Free Churchman. In the Free Churches his character was formed. The faith that held his reason and governed his conscience was of their making. The causes he loved and served, the beneficences and benevolences he cultivated, were those they inspired and encouraged. The character we associate with the Puritan of the seventeenth century had in him its modern embodiment. He had the high principle and unbending will, the vigorous conscience and gracious domesticity, the belief in the sanctity of the secular and the sovereignty of the Divine, which distinguished the typical Puritan ;

and he had the imagination capable of turning the highest ideals into the realities of his own life which gave us Milton and Bunyan in letters, Roger Williams and Harry Vane and Oliver Cromwell in statecraft, Col. and Lucy Hutchinson in the poetry of conduct and the home affections. The qualities which marked him in this respect may be summed up in two simple terms. In religion he was on the one hand Biblical, and on the other hand he was marked by the sweetest and largest catholicity. These had two very fit literary expressions. He edited and published a paragraph Bible with index and notes, which testify to the faith that was in him, and he edited and printed a hymn book which summarised the great points in which all the churches in the supreme act of praise were united and agreed. Now this library, interpreted by the mind of his widow, incorporates and impersonates these two distinctive features of his character. It expresses a belief in Biblical religion which he confessed gave to him the only answer to many questions, and was a sure relief in innumerable cares. While he was in his heart a religious man, there never was a man who had about him less of the sectarian, or who was more purely and personally catholic. This library, therefore, is dedicated to Biblical research as well as to literature. The Althorp collection came in, as it were, by the way. The great fundamental, the essential character of the library, is that it is Biblical and theological, a great means for educating men in Scriptural knowledge. In one room in this building, and that room not large, there is perhaps the most marvellous collection of Bibles in the world; they make a great appeal to the literary and æsthetic sense; they speak of English style, and art, and of printing throughout the world. They have immense historical interest, for they tell of the revolution which printing brought everywhere. Now not only was he, as I have said, a man deeply devoted to Biblical study, he was no less devoted to practical and personal religion; and the library that commemorates him is meant to be not a mere collection of books, but an institution so constituted as to make for religion, and especially for religious unity, for it is the heirloom of no particular denomination, it is to be the possession and property of

no single body, it is to stand at the service of all the churches. No single sect will be able to claim it as its own. No single or collective body will be able to take from it its catholic and œcumenical character."

The following letters to Prof. Peake deal with the selection of theological works of reference for the Rylands' Library :

"*January* 3, 1900.

"I have had a letter from Mackennal relative to *Theology and Philosophy*. I wish I had known fully what you had proposed, as I think your proposals are all very excellent. The *Studien und Kritiken* you can hardly do without if you intend to be a reference library. It is so full of material that, while needed only by special scholars, it would still be a misfortune to have a great library without it. You don't need to take the *Literaturblatt*. But before determining on your course as regards purchasing either complete sets or current numbers, I would recommend you to ascertain what magazines are taken in the several colleges at Manchester : keep a record of these in the library, and as far as possible avoid them, using the 'Rylands' as a sort of synthetic or co-ordinating centre for all the libraries round. . . . There are certain older magazines that can now only be purchased in sets that you would do well to keep an eye on, such as the *Tübinger Zeitschrift*. I have been looking at the catalogue of French magazines. One I see you have not which is one you ought to have : the *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions*. Get a complete set of it and keep up the subscription. I think I would like to come to Manchester some day, go over the library, and make certain suggestions. The whole department of the history of religion needs carefully to be looked to : modern systematic theology is almost unknown : a great deal of Biblical theology ought also to be added. I think you ought to be guided by the principle that, while getting the magazines and journals necessary to the fullest knowledge and the best, yet the books purchased should be of solid worth. The ephemeral things are inadequate. Carefully avoid them."

*To the same.*

"I heartily congratulate you on the coming of your son. I well remember what an old friend and teacher wrote to me after the birth of John: 'You will now know what Scripture means when it says, Like as a father pitieth his children.' We learn much here, and in no respect more, the way in which our human experience interprets the divine truth.

"As to the books you refer to me about, I send you a number of German catalogues on Philosophy which I have just got from Parker. You will find all you want there much more cheaply than with Nutt, and I think if you go over them you will be satisfied that this is so. I have noted with red pencil in the margin some of the editions and copies you would do well to get. You can easily get any bookseller who has a foreign connection to get them for you, or you can order them through Parker."

*To Dr. Garvie.*

"*March* 14, 1899.

"I am glad to have your letter, and I was specially glad to hear both in India and since my return of the remarkable success that attended your lectures and your visit as a whole. It was altogether a gratifying thing for me in particular and the college. I need not say that I shall esteem it a special distinction to have the lectures dedicated to me. I hope to be able to attend at the centenary of the church. I hope to have a quiet time in Scotland next year again, though I am very doubtful if I shall be able to realise it in this one. We are all very much better for our Indian experiences, and are quite feeling that of all the joys of travel the joy of the return home is the foremost and best."

## CHAPTER XI

### IN LABOURS ABUNDANT

### 1901–1905

In the spring of 1901 Fairbairn paid a holiday visit to Italy, in company with Dr. R. F. Horton, of London, and his old pupil and friend, Joseph King, M.P. He was at this time in his sixty-third year, and was beginning to feel the need of more frequent relaxation. He gladly cast off the harness for a time, and had still the old boyish delight in new scenes and new places. But he had also the old home-sickness, and never went away without worrying himself about the welfare of those left behind, and making the due receipt of letters from them a first condition of his happiness. The party travelled over well-known ground, and it is needless to follow their journey in detail. The following letters to Mrs. Fairbairn will suffice to give some idea of their doings :

" *March* 24, 1901.

" Here we are in Italy, in the train between Turin and Genoa, passing through the valley of the Po, 4.15 Italian time, 3.15 English, with no chance of stopping till we reach Pisa at 11.20 to-night. But I must give you an account of our adventures since I posted my letter to you at Folkestone. There was quite a gale in the Channel. Horton and I kept on our feet and weathered it, but King was on his back and enjoyed himself in the cabin, while we paced the deck. We had quite a fine run to Paris, which we reached about 5.40. We drove across from North to South Railway, and then went off in search of dinner. We had an excellent one for two francs each, and returned to the station in time to get our seats by

8.20. King had got us sleeping berths. We were in bed by 9.15, and by 9.30 I was sound asleep, and slept almost without waking till daylight, when we got up, to find our saloon climbing the Alps and the snow falling heavily. It fell so fast that we almost feared it would break down the train and delay us. But we got through all right. By 10 a.m. we were beginning to descend a beautiful valley into Italy. We got no coffee or anything till after 11 o'clock, when we had a capital *déjeuner*. If Horton had not had a pot of calf-foot jelly we should have starved. But when feeding time came we enjoyed ourselves famously, and except a cup of coffee I have had nothing since (4.45 now). The heavy rains and melting snow have sent down floods, and the valley of the Po is a wonderful sight. It's like one immense ocean, only the water is brown as mud can make it. The river has broken its banks ; farmhouses stand deep in water, farmers are getting through their fields in boats, and nothing but wet and water fills the whole scene. King makes an excellent cicerone. Horton and he both speak French and Italian, and we get on excellently."

"Assisi,

"*March* 27, 1901.

"We left Rome on Tuesday, after a most enjoyable time, crowded with interest. We saw so much, learned so much, that it seems almost as if we had been years from home ; but though crowded, it is not exhausting. We are able to enjoy ourselves a great deal. King is capital, a perfect hero. Horton is good, wonderfully good when you get beneath the surface, full of humour and of fun. We came on here at 12. The city has only 3000 inhabitants, but it has house-room for 30,000 and church-room for three times that number. Death and desolation seem to reign over all, yet St. Francis lived here. The churches were built in his honour and are full of the most wonderful frescoes. We spent the whole morning examining them, and a good part of the afternoon ; but we walked out from 4 to 7 to see a monastery among the hills as full of sordid poverty as any place I ever had the mortification to see. We came back over the

hills with a most splendid sunset, purple and gold shot with the torn edges of rain-laden clouds, and falling like streamers down to the earth. We came in to a very simple yet very sufficient dinner, and I am spending the evening trying to overtake my correspondence."

"RAVENNA,

"*March* 29, 1901.

"We have had a jolly time. My letter from Assisi would bring down our wanderings to that point. We left there on Thursday for Ancona; came through a hilly country full of vineyards and white torrents, and then got into the lowlands east of the Apennines. Ancona is a seaport, as old as the Greeks, with some beautiful Roman remains, an arch of Augustus who had completed the old Flaminian way. It is a magnificent piece of architecture, practically intact, in spite of its 2000 years' existence. We visited the church made out of an ancient temple of Venus, where the classical grace and strength seemed a reproach to Catholic tawdriness and decay. We went on to Rimini, where we saw the most pagan churches in the whole of Italy, and had a most exciting adventure. We had gone to walk round the walls, and had come to what proved a rather bad part of the town. Some boys, seeing that we were English, began to follow us; called out 'Oh yes,' 'All right,' apparently the only English they knew; then they began to throw stones. They all went wide of the mark, and we turned up a street, and were soon lost from their view. It did not amount to much, but it showed how needful it is not to venture too far out of the beaten track. In the morning we came on here, where your letter arrived this morning. We have a long day before us, and so I can only say—word from home, especially when the word is good, is the great joy of travel."

Of this visit to Italy Dr. Horton writes:

"There are two vivid memories of Dr. Fairbairn in Italy which are so characteristic that I venture to record them. I had the privilege of taking him over Rome, which he had never seen; but even the wonder and

delight of Rome did not evoke the spirit of the man as these two incidents did. The first was at Assisi. We were visiting the Portiuncula ; and at that time there was a Franciscan Brother, named Fra Bernadino, who had a great knowledge of English, and received English visitors with a courtesy which aimed at their conversion to the Holy Roman Church. After we had seen the various sights of the great church, Father Bernadino presented us with a little card, on which was printed a prayer for the conversion of England, and he asked us all to repeat constantly this prayer. Dr. Fairbairn was moved to the very centre of his being ; his mouth and face worked as I have seen them work on the platform, or in the pulpit, when he was launched upon one of his greatest efforts. 'The conversion of England!' he asked. 'What to, and what from?' 'Is there,' he said, 'a Catholic scholar in England to whom an intelligent man can go to learn the truth of religion or of Christianity?' The unhappy Father Bernadino ventured to mention one scholar who had a great repute in Catholic circles. 'A pairfectly ignorant man!' fumed out the little Doctor. Father Bernadino appeared as if Vesuvius had broken over him, and humbly retreated into deferential silence. I think he had no idea that anything so explosive and decisive and intelligent could be contained in the unpretentious body of the Scotchman and the Protestant.

"The other incident was at Rimini, where we were seeing the Renaissance Church which had been built by Sigismund, that church which is the exact expression of the paganism of the Renaissance with its sculptures of heathen gods and goddesses, and the monogram I.S., signifying not, as it suggests, *Jesus hominum salvator*, but Sigismund and Isotta, Isotta the mistress of Sigismund. It chanced that some Catholic ceremony was in process, and the priests and acolytes were visiting the chapels in succession, carrying the symbols of the crucifixion, cross, nails, hammer, thorns, etc. ; strange chants and incensing accompanying the procession. Dr. Fairbairn watched the proceedings with rising indignation, and, perhaps identifying the present worship with the symbols of paganism in the church, he exclaimed, 'This is not *my* religion, nor is this *my* God!'

"Needless to say, these instances do not represent the prevailing temper of the Doctor during our tour in Italy; he was the most charming and consoling of travelling companions, and his essential humility came out in the questions he asked about Italian art, of which he had made no special study. But those two explosions were, to me at least, more interesting and characteristic than all the rest. The spirit of John Knox and of the Covenanters always slept under those piles of erudition and that acquired moderation of language."

Of the same visit Mr. Joseph King writes:

"I had the privilege of visiting Italy in his company in 1901, the only visit he ever made to that land. His energy, both of body and mind, was then quite unimpaired, and the youthful delight of being in a foreign country, and seeing new places and strange manners was as much in evidence as his wonderful memory of the history of the Papacy, the rise and achievements of the Italian Republics, and the story and writings of not only Dante and St. Francis, but such recondite authors as Pico della Mirandola. One memory especially lingers with me—his attitude towards the Roman Church, his readiness to be generous, and even to praise its great achievements, but his strong feeling and expressions that its day and its moral power had departed."

Shortly after Fairbairn's return from Italy there appeared a book entitled *Priesthood and Sacrifice*, in the production of which he had some share. It was the outcome and contained the report of a private conference of High Churchmen, Low Churchmen, and Nonconformists, on the subject indicated in the title.[1] The conference had been called some time previously by Dr. Sanday, and met at his house in Oxford. Then, as now, this great Churchman was always ready to play the part of a peacemaker, and lost no opportuniry of enabling the various and antagonistic sections of the Christian Church to understand one another's position better. As the correspondence between him and Fairbairn shows,

[1] See p. 250.

the two of them were largely responsible for the *personnel* of the conference and for the form which their deliberations took. The company consisted of Dr. Moberly, Canon Gore,[1] Father Puller, Canon Scott Holland,[2] Rev. C. G. Lang,[3] Archdeacon Wilson, Dr. Ryle,[4] Canon Bernard, Rev. A. C. Headlam, Dr. Salmond, Dr. Davison, Rev. Arnold Thomas, Dr. Forsyth, and Dr. Fairbairn, with Dr. Sanday in the chair. Its deliberations lasted for two days, and were confined to the questions of the place, functions and meaning of the ideas of sacrifice and priesthood in the Scriptures and in the Church. On this main subject the conference reached a very considerable measure of agreement, more, indeed, than had been thought possible by either side. Fairbairn took a leading part in the discussions, and strongly urged the Pauline view of the Church and of the priesthood of believers. He summed up the position reached by the conference as follows :

" We have made manifest our belief in the truth and reality of the Church, in the continuity of the Church, in its being our common mother, as it were, in whose bosom we were born, through whose gracious influences we were reborn, and within whose sacred precincts lived those who brought us into holy and real communion with God and His Son. But three ideas which have played a great part in our discussions ought to be most carefully analysed and clearly defined ; first, what do we mean when we speak of the Church as the ' mystical body of Christ ' ? secondly, what does its priesthood mean ? and thirdly, what do we intend the phrase ' the ministerial organs of its priesthood ' to signify ? We have the more need to be here explicit and distinct, as it is evident that while we are all agreed as to the priesthood of the Church, we are yet by no means agreed as to what that priesthood is and involves."

This expresses quite clearly the general conclusions of the discussion. As in most such cases of conference

[1] Now Bishop of Oxford.
[2] Now Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford.
[3] Now Archbishop of York. [4] Now Dean of Westminster.

between Anglicans and Free Churchmen, the result was altogether useful in helping those who took part in it to a better understanding of the position which each side held and in discovering how much larger was the common ground between them than they might have been prepared to believe. But, when that was done, there remained the fact that on certain vital matters the two sides took radically different views, and that they were not prepared to depart from them on any evidence that those who differed from them were able to produce. The conference made for friendship and for better understanding, but hardly for agreement.

In March, 1902, Fairbairn published his *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*.[1] As we have already seen, it had been delayed by his desire to incorporate in it some of the new knowledge gained in his Indian tour, and it was the ripe fruit of work lasting over many years. And yet the book is in some respects a torso. It was intended to be the last in a series of monographs on the philosophy of the great religions of the world, but it was the only one of the series that ever saw the light; although to the end the writer hoped at least to complete the circle of his thought by adding to it a Philosophy of Religion, and a History of Religions, none of these projects was ever fulfilled. Of this book itself it may be said that it contains some of Fairbairn's best work, though Dr. Peake is quite right in his judgment that it was issued too late in the day, and that it would have created a far deeper impression if it had appeared twenty years earlier. So far as Fairbairn himself was concerned, this would have been quite possible, for the book contains material which he had been accumulating and casting into shape in his

[1] The book bore the following Dedication: "This book is dedicated to Alexander Mackennal, Albert Spicer, and to the memory of Robert William Dale, in grateful recognition of services rendered freely and without stint to Mansfield College, and of friendships which have enhanced the worth and the joy of life."

χάρις τίκτει χάριν.

college lectures for a long time past. It was his misfortune that the pressure of a busy life lived in the service of the churches never gave him the time he needed for, and could have so well spent on, his literary work. As it was, the book met with a most cordial reception, and passed through three editions in the year in which it was published. Though it marked, as it were, a return to the author's first love, and dealt with those problems of religious history and philosophy which had been the subject of his earliest book thirty years before, it did so in a new way, and was recognised to be a most timely and powerful Christian apologetic. Dr. James Denney wrote of it in the *British Weekly :*

" *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* is a truly great book, rich, comprehensive, and profound. It is something to find at the present moment, when a species of theological positivism is threatening everywhere to dissolve the connection of religion with reason, that there is a man among us who does not despair of the intelligence which God has given, and is not afraid of the combination of ideas expressed in the title of this book. More than anything that Principal Fairbairn has yet written, it may be said to represent the ripe fruit of his life's work. It is full of knowledge, experience, reflection, criticism. There is a largeness of mind in it answering to the greatness of the subjects treated, which grows upon the reader, and makes him slow to dissent ; and it is animated throughout by that moral passion without which it is impossible to think to purpose about a moral world. There are even charming touches of autobiography, which, without obtruding the author's personality, make us feel that what he is writing about is as real to him as his own life. The style is that with which Dr. Fairbairn's readers are familiar. He is always strenuous and copious, never undignified, often rising to a kind of eloquence ; and if he is rarely simple or concise, and sometimes dazzles the hapless reader with an elaborate antithesis which was designed to bring his thoughts to a point, every man has the defects of his qualities."

Lord Morley wrote of the book:

"It is late, but not too late, to thank you for sending me your book. I should value it for the sake of the donor; and let me say how much I feel the too kind and moving words of your inscription on the fly-leaf. But I value it for the depth and sincerity of its argument. I am as yet but half-way through, but I am powerfully affected by its noble tone and by your grave, weighty, and close manner of handling topics too often (on both sides) flashily and angrily approached. When we meet we may converse."

The book is described in the Preface as an attempt to do two things: "first to explain religion through nature and man; and secondly to construe Christianity through religion." The Introduction states the problem of the Christian religion. Book I deals with questions in the philosophy of nature and mind which affect belief in the supernatural Person. Book II with the Person of Christ and the making of the Christian religion. This subject is further subdivided under the following heads: The Founder as an historical Person, or Jesus as He appears in the Synoptic Gospels; The Creation of the Christian religion by the Interpretation of the Person of Christ; and The Religion of Christ and the Ideal of Religion. The argument thus indicated is not one that can be summarised. Its main features will be familiar to all students of Fairbairn's work, and it is stated with a fulness and a wealth of illustration that are altogether characteristic. He claims that the book is "neither a philosophy nor a history of religion, but an endeavour to look at what is at once the central fact and idea of the Christian faith by a mind whose chief labour in life has been to make an attempt at such a philosophy through such a history."

He recognises that religion is an essential part of man's whole life, and that much of its value lies in the fact that it is an eternal challenge to human reason. He works out his argument, therefore, in the form of a philosophy

of history which is one of the most novel and most interesting features of the book. The work as a whole has a very real apologetic value, and is perhaps the best illustration that we have of Fairbairn's passionate belief in the ultimate rationality of man's religious consciousness, and of the systems based upon it. This is instanced especially in the sections on the problem of sin and evil, where he attempts to frame a theodicy on the basis of belief in the freedom of man on the one hand, and in the goodness of God on the other. The whole question is viewed in the light of a confirmed optimism, and the argument is strengthened by appeals to experience of a very interesting kind. In one of these there is a reference to the premature death of his friend Strachan which is worth quoting : [1]

" He who writes these things once knew a man who was to him companion, friend, and more than brother. They lived, they thought, they argued together ; together they walked on the hillside and by the seashore ; they had listened to the wind as it soughed through the trees, and to the multitudinous laughter of the waves as they broke upon the beach ; together they had watched the purple light which floated radiant above the heather, and together they had descended into the slums of a great city, where no light was nor any fragrance, and had faced the worst depravity of our kind. Each kept hope alive in the other and stimulated him to high endeavour and better purpose ; but though the same week saw the two friends settled in chosen fields of labour, the one settled only to be called home, the other to remain and work his tale of toil until his longer day be done. But the one who died seemed to leave his spirit behind in the breast of the man who survived ; and he has lived ever since, and lives still, feeling as if the soul within him belonged to the man who died. And may we not say this experience is common and interprets the experience of the race ? Death has to be viewed not as a matter of a single person, but of collective man ; and it works out the good of

[1] *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 145.

collective man by doing no injustice to the individual, but rather using him to fulfil the highest function it is granted to mortal man to perform. So let us say that however man may conceive death, it belongs to those sufferings by which mankind learns obedience and is made perfect."

Another very interesting feature of this book is its discussion of the question as to the relation between anthropology and the history and philosophy of religion. Though this has developed since he wrote in ways that he did not anticipate, Fairbairn was one of the first to recognise its great importance. He did good service in delimiting its frontiers, as it were, and in warning us against the misapplications and hasty inferences that were so easy and so mischievous.

"There is no region," he writes,[1] "where a healthy and fearless scepticism is more needed than in the literature which relates to ethnography. There is no people so difficult to understand and to interpret as a savage people; there is no field where competent interpreters are so few and so rare, where unlearned authorities are so many and so rash, or where testimonies are so contradictory or so apt to dissolve under analysis into airy nothings. But what we deprecate is not the collection, the investigation, and the co-ordination of all facts connected with the habits, beliefs, state, and affinities of savage peoples: it is the philosophy they may be made to disguise. For the explicit and reasoned or implicit and inarticulated postulate of many ethnographically stated and illustrated speculations as to the earlier forms of religion is a doctrine, not simply as to the development of man and society, but as to the kind of being who was to be developed, what potentialities he had, and what forces made him the being he finally became. It is this doctrine which may both need criticism and repay it. For it does not follow that the anthropology which is an accurate description of man in his savage state is a good philosophy of religion."

[1] *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 204.

Again : [1]

"It would be hard to exaggerate the rudeness of the form which religion assumes in the lower stages of culture; but this ought not to conceal from us the fact that the process which produced it was, in its own order, if not as fine, yet as rational and real as that to which we owe the art, the poetry, and the philosophy of to-day. Man produced it because he was struggling to express or realise himself, within a system that forced him to be rational in order that he might be man while the system remained Nature. And the real continuity of religion lies in the continued activity of the creative process, the thought which is ever refining the forms it has inherited, and seeking fitter vehicles for its richer and sublimer ideas."

As may be gathered from these quotations, Fairbairn was a convinced evolutionist, though he was never content to believe that the lower stages in the development of religion could explain the higher. It was only through the higher that the lower could be understood and interpreted. To him the highest of all religions was Christianity, but he did not therefore disparage others. He believed that "he who would maintain the Christian, must be just and even generous to all the religions created and professed by man." He reached his philosophy of Christianity therefore through history, and in its historical expression was able to vindicate it as the religion best suited to human needs. The apologetic scope and value of his position has never been better stated than in the words of his friend and pupil, Dr. Peake. He writes : [2]

The apologetic "was many-sided, and gradually concentrated along many converging lines on Jesus as God's perfect self-expression, the centre of all history, the incarnation of the ethical ideal, the perfect channel of the Divine Grace. It would not perhaps be quite true to speak of his theology as Christo-centric, it was rather theo-centric. But he believed in the doctrine of the

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 212. [2] *Expositor*, eighth series, p. 327.

Trinity and in the Divinity of Christ. The Son of God was from eternity an integral element in the Godhead, and had become incarnate in time. No one was more concerned that full honour should be done to the Son; but he felt that, even where the idea of a schism within the Godhead was avoided, there was a danger lest the Father should be hidden behind the Son. He believed that a new day was beginning for systematic theology. We had had abundance of 'agglomerative dogmatics,' the time had come for a system of theology relevant to the present position which should be a system indeed, dominated by a sovereign principle. The material principle he found, not as Luther, in justification by faith, but as Calvin, in the doctrine of God. Only it was not God conceived as sovereign and all-sufficient will; for the Christian theologian must think of God as Jesus thought of Him, who knew Him as no other had known Him. Here he held that the old theology had largely failed. It had indeed claimed for Christ His true place in the Godhead. He had been passionately loved and loyally served. But His own teaching had been largely neglected in ecclesiastical theology. Now, however, the movement of thought and of criticism in the nineteenth century had driven the Church back to the Person of Jesus. His life, His teaching, His influence had been studied as never before, and we knew His mind as earlier generations had not known it. So we must think of God as He thought of Him, and make His conception of God determinative of our whole theology; and Jesus thought of God as Father. I cannot, of course, stay to follow the detailed working out of this principle in the construction of a system. But one or two points ought not to be omitted. His doctrine of Fatherhood implied no relaxation of ethical stringency. He urged with convincing power that the Father must be more merciless to sin than the sovereign, since, while the latter saw in it the disturbance of order, the former knew it to be the ruin of His sons. Further, the 'return to Christ,' which was so emphasised in this connection, might have seemed to involve an undue depreciation of the apostolic writers, and notably of Paul. There was no real justification for such a misconception; but it was effectually

destroyed by the *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*. The portrait of Jesus in the Gospels is indispensable, but it alone would have assured no permanence to the religion. It is the interpretation placed upon Jesus which has given the religion its permanence. 'It is not Jesus of Nazareth who has so powerfully entered into history: it is the deified Christ who has been believed, loved, and obeyed as the Saviour of the world.' He says: 'Without the personal charm of the historical Jesus the œcumenical creeds would never have been either formulated or tolerated.' But he says further, 'Without the metaphysical conception of Christ the Christian religion would long ago have ceased to live.'"

In August, 1902, a Royal Charter was granted for the foundation of the British Academy for the promotion of historical, philosophical, and philological studies. Fairbairn had had a good deal to do with the negotiations which led up to this result, and became one of the original members and a Fellow of the Academy. Of his work in connection with it the secretary, Prof. Gollancz, D.Litt., writes as follows:

"Dr. Fairbairn was not only one of the original Fellows of the Academy named in the Charter, but took a very active part in the preliminary steps leading to the foundation of the Academy. He was a member of the first Council, and was most assiduous in his attendance; it need hardly be said that great weight was attached to his opinion. He gave much attention to the important problems with which the Council had to deal in these early years of the history of the Academy. One could not help being struck by his large-hearted and generous views, which he set forth with characteristic sagacity. At the ordinary meetings, when papers were read, he frequently attended, not only when he was directly interested in the subject, but also on all occasions when it was possible for him to be present. He often added to the value of the discussion by some brief comment, although he put off, owing to his engagements, his own contributions to the proceedings of the Academy. His death was a great blow to all of us who had been associated

with him in the work of the Academy, as the late President Sir A. W. Ward fittingly recorded in his address to the Annual General Meeting on July 1, 1912; his name has been 'added to the growing roll of our Fellows whose task is done and who are no longer with us except in the spirit of their labours. That spirit—the spirit of truth which knows of no faltering and of no yielding, but which, nevertheless, works in perfect harmony with the spirit of love and (I venture to add) the spirit of prayer, as they presented themselves to our great English eighteenth-century mystic—no scholar and divine of our age has more signally attested than the late Dr. Fairbairn, who died in revered old age, mourned by many generations of hearers. To their successors he has bequeathed a rich store of *studies*—as he loved to call his work—in religious philosophy and history, and to us the memory of a nature singularly sympathetic and gentle in the midst of arduous research and subtle controversy.' This well expresses what we of the British Academy feel, and I may add that I shall always recall his memory with grateful regard, for towards myself he always showed the most gracious kindness, consideration, and encouragement in the heavy task I had undertaken."

The period which we have now reached was perhaps the busiest in Fairbairn's exceptionally busy life. The calls upon his time were incessant, and there are frequent references in his letters to the sense of burden and strain under which he laboured. He was almost too ready to help those who appealed to him, however slight their claims might be, and he began to realise that his toil might exact from him too heavy a price. We have already seen how he found some relaxation in bicycling, which at that time became a fashionable form of exercise in Oxford. Some time previously he had taken up golf, and, as with so many, it became with him increasingly a favourite means of health and recreation. He threw himself into it with all a Scotchman's ardour, setting aside certain days in every week which were sacred to it, and working at it with entire seriousness and devotion.

Both at Oxford and at Lossiemouth, in the north of Scotland, where he had built a house at which he spent most of his summer vacations, he found in it a welcome release from his daily tasks. It gave him just the kind of relaxation that he needed, and helped to stave off the evil day when his bodily strength would be no longer equal to the strain he put upon it. At Oxford he played regularly with Prof. Percy Gardner, Mr. Fairbrother, and Mr. Sydney Ball. They were known as "the anti-Catholic foursome." It is impossible to give any detailed account of his multifarious activities during these years, nor is it easy to enter into his inner life. His mind he put into his various writings, and into conversation with his friends. His correspondence had to do almost necessarily with business matters, and references to current events or to the course of his own life and thought are comparatively rare. He frequently corresponded on literary matters with his friend Mr. Stuart Reid, and on things theological with many of his old students. The following letter to Dr. Peake, written in 1902, is typical of many in its careful detail:

"I am very pleased indeed to hear about your election to the Hartley Lectureship. Of the two subjects you name I think, with you, that 'The Religion of Israel as a Preparation for Christianity' is too large. It is different with 'The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament,' and I do not think you need fear to expand it beyond your 'Job' or that you will exhaust it in connection therewith. On the contrary, that may only be a preparation for a fuller discussion of the questions that grow out of it. Job deals with what may be called the theistic problem of suffering, and to discuss it from this side would give you occasion for a more philosophical handling than would be otherwise possible. Other questions would emerge; in the Psalms especially the attitude it creates towards God and its general disciplinary action on man; while in Isaiah there would arise the further discussion in connection with 'the Servant of God,' of its redemptive

function, which would bring you into line with some of the deepest elements in the Pauline theology and the New Testament view of sacrifice as a whole, especially considering the part that the Deutero-Isaiah has both in the form and the matter of the thought of the New Testament.

"You would find it a most fruitful field to work out the contrast between involuntary suffering, which raises doubts as to the beneficence of deity, and voluntary suffering, which is the expression or effect of the same beneficence working redemptively on behalf of man. If you could give the idea such an expansion as I hint at, you could, I think, make the lecture a notable contribution both to Christian thought and Biblical theology."

In this same letter Fairbairn refers to a notice he was about to write for the *Speaker* of the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, which was then coming out. A brief extract from that notice, which was not completed till the following year, will illustrate still further the breadth of his theological interest, and the pains he took in departments of theology which were not specially his own. Writing of the work of Schmiedel and Van Manen, he says :[1]

"Schmiedel is a scholar of the first order, and the work he has done in connection with the *Encyclopædia*—whatever its character in other respects—will certainly tend to enhance his reputation. He and Van Manen occupy in many respects opposite positions, and hold canons of criticism that are mutually destructive. For Schmiedel's critical knowledge and processes we confess sincere respect. But the respect we give to him we must withhold from Van Manen. To Schmiedel the one certain point in New Testament criticism is supplied by the Pauline Epistles. To Van Manen there is a Pauline literature, but there are no Epistles of Paul. Romans is to him not a letter written by the apostle and sent to a definite Church ; it is a tractate, a book written in the form of a letter, but compiled 'in a very peculiar manner by use

[1] The *Speaker*, July 4, 1903.

of existing written materials wherein the same subjects were treated in a similar, or at least not very divergent way.' The criticism by which he supports his position is of a very perfunctory and shallow order, and contains statements of a very remarkable kind. He says, for example, 'The probability is that Tertullian had no acquaintance with chapters fifteen and sixteen.' Yet Tertullian makes reference to the fifteenth chapter twice, and to the sixteenth on three several occasions. But we feel it hopeless to argue with one who regards a book so distinguished throughout by unity of mind, of style, of argument, of character as is the Epistle to the Romans, as a mere compilation from undiscovered and even undiscoverable sources. As a matter of fact, there is no book in all antiquity that so bears the stamp of one author, and could so little be described by any critic who has ever attempted to weave workmanship and worker together as a sort of *cento* of quotations from unknown masters all of one school. And this is a point where Biblical theology has something to say, and the criticism suffers from want of any adequate recognition of the personal impress which the theology receives from the theologian."

About the time that this criticism appeared Fairbairn wrote two articles in the *Expositor* on the Ideas of the Fourth Gospel. They are purely exegetical, and even sermonic in character: and though they make no real contribution to the problem of the Fourth Gospel, as it is the fashion to call it, they throw some interesting sidelights on Fairbairn's own mind. In the first of the two articles, speaking of our Lord's question to Philip, 'Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know Me?' he writes: [1]

"Did you ever try to teach men, and had you ever a loved pupil of high promise, over whom you have spent brooding nights and toilsome days, in the hope that all his promise might yet be realised? And have you never found in some ecstatic moment of thought and discussion

[1] *Expositor*, sixth series, Vol. VI, p. 175.

this same pupil put a question which showed that he had never seen into the heart of your teaching, or even so much as guessed that it had a heart? You may then be inclined to blame your own blundering, or your fatal inability to be articulate where the deepest beliefs are concerned, and to forget that what you have won by agony of thought and experience cannot be understood by those who have never been cradled by suffering into thought. If that has been your experience, then you will be able to understand the mood and mind of Jesus; His pain at having a disciple who had not learned; His joy at discovering the disciple to be still a learner whose ignorance was richer than any knowledge."

The second article [1] contains a very fresh restatement of the argument for the being of God, starting from the position, "Man was made by God for God, and he cannot do without the God who made him. Atheism is a thing of art, not of nature." He illustrates his contention from the *Autobiography of John Stuart Mill*, a book to which he was very fond of referring both in lectures and conversation. The father, James Mill, professed himself an atheist, but "the God he rejected was not 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,' but a perfectly impossible deity, an almighty maker of hell for men, and men for hell. If James Mill had but thought more consistently, he would have seen that to deny this God was to become, not an atheist, but rather a more perfect theist." So his son, though professedly brought up without religion, and though he too, largely misconceived religion, yet witnessed to its power. He, perhaps more than any man of his day, witnessed to the veracity and vitality of man's need for God, which persists in spite of the incapacity to see Him."

The criticism is shrewd and pertinent, and forms a good foundation for building up again the familiar apologetic. Articles such as these are typical of Fairbairn's work during the latter days in Oxford. He was

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 260.

now doing less pulpit and platform work than he had been accustomed to. He still preached once or twice a term in the college chapel, but he generally fled from Oxford as soon as the vacation began, and spent more and more time in Scotland. But his mental activity was as great as ever. He wrote on a great variety of subjects, and was all the time laying the foundations of books on the philosophy of religion and on comparative religion. Neither of these projects came to fulfilment, and the mass of material which he had accumulated was not left in such a condition that others could use it. Among it was a single chapter on "Experience in Religion" that was practically completed, and forms a good index to the kind of work that he was doing. It is an exhaustive historical survey of the subject, based on an immense number of references and quotations, the results of which are massed together and set forth with the vividness and skill characteristic of Fairbairn's best work. Among the subjects which occupied his attention in the years 1902 and 1903 were two articles for the second volume of the *Cambridge Modern History*, written at the instance of his friend, Prof. A. W. Ward (now Sir Adolphus Ward), Master of Peterhouse. The first of these was on "Calvin and the Reformed Church," and the second on "Tendencies of European Thought in the Age of the Reformation." In Calvin Fairbairn had a subject altogether to his mind, and his study of him is among the best things he ever wrote. He always distinguished between the man and his system. Of the latter he had been a convinced and determined critic from the earliest days of his ministry. But he always recognised the great part it had played in the development of the thought of Christendom, and he would never suffer the good that was in it to be forgotten. For the man he had a genuine admiration. In describing him as one whose mind was the mind of Erasmus, while his faith and conscience were those of Luther, he struck a point of affinity with himself that could not fail

to win his sympathy. He gave full weight to Calvin's work as a social reformer, a politician, and a man of letters, and in these matters found him more original than as a theologian. His theology was derived mainly from Augustine :

" Without Augustine we should never have had Calvinism, which is but the principles of the anti-Pelagian treatises developed, systematised, and applied."

But while Calvin found the roots of his theology in Augustine, he grew it in his own way. Fairbairn puts this in a way that shows his own sympathies, but is at the same time historically true :[1]

" Augustine's theology was absolute, but his theory of the Church was conditional, and thus the one qualified the other ; the God whom the thinker conceived was modified by the God of whom the priest was the representative and mouthpiece. It is the essence of the priestly idea to manipulate and administer the conditions on which God finds access to men, and men gain access to God. Hence, so long as Augustine's theology was embedded in a sacerdotal system, the system softened the theology ; the thought was accommodated to the institution, the institution was not subdued to the likeness of the thought. But Calvin rejected the Church of Augustine, and took over his later intellectual system in all its naked severity. The sin of man confronted the grace of God ; man, sinful by nature, could do no right ; God, infinite in majesty and in holiness, could do no wrong. Man was born in sin ; his nature was corrupt, and as his nature was his actions must be. If then he was to be saved, God must save him ; and as God's will was gracious, saving was as natural to Him as sinning was to man. Hence we could contribute nothing towards our own salvation. God did it all ; we had no merit, and He had all the glory. In a system so conceived there was no room for the priest ; his prayers and sacrifices, his masses and absolutions, his shrines and relics and

[1] *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol II, p. 365.

articles of worship, were but the impertinences of ephemeral and feeble man, in the face of the eternal potency."

The second article, on "Tendencies of European Thought in the Age of the Reformation," is a brilliant but summary discussion of those movements of thought which made the sixteenth century famous. It is but a brief monograph on a vast subject, but it is eminently sane and informative. Written in an almost breathless style, it characterises influences and individuals in a few pregnant sentences that do their work and are not easily forgotten. Behind it all lies an intimate knowledge of the whole period and a shrewd estimate of the conflicting forces at work. Though its judgments may seem sometimes to be sweeping, there is chapter and verse for most of them. It is the kind of historical writing of which we have perhaps too little; but there is some justification for the criticism that it recalls Macaulay in its love for generalisation as well as in its sweep and brilliance. The main lines of the article may be gathered from the following paragraph of the Introduction:

"It is customary to distinguish the Renaissance as the revival of letters, from the Reformation as the revival of religion. But the distinction is neither formally correct nor materially exact. The Renaissance was not necessarily secular and classical; it might be and often was both religious and Christian; nor was the Reformation essentially religious and moral, it might be and often was political and secular. Of the two revivals the one is indeed in point of time the elder; but the elder is not so much a cause as simply an antecedent of the younger. Both revivals were literary and interpretative, both were imitative and recreative; but they differed in spirit, and they differed also in province and in results. There was a revival of letters which could not possibly become a reformation of religion, and there was a revival which necessarily involved such a reformation; and the two revivals must be distinguished, if the consequences are to be understood."

The article contains brief but vivid and intimate characterisations of Pico della Mirandola, Erasmus, Bruno, Rabelais, Montaigne, and many another great figure. Luther's doctrine is described "as the very root and essence of German mysticism, which gives to the German hymns their beauty and their pathos, which inspired the speculations of Brentz and Chemnitz, and which later determined Schelling's doctrine of 'indifference,' or 'the identity of subject and object,' and Hegel's 'absolute idealism.' If we read Boehme from this point of view, how splendid his dreams and how reasonable his very extravagances become."

The following description of the reformers may be taken as a typical study in adjectives:

"The strange and tempestuous Luther, the audacious and reckless Hutten, the moderate and scholarly Pirkheimer, the conciliatory and reasonable Melancthon, the heroic and magnanimous Zwingli, the learned and large-minded Œcolampadius."

May we imagine that even Fairbairn could not find a couple of epithets which would suffice to characterise Calvin, a notable omission from this list?

The year 1904 was marked for Fairbairn by the death of his old friend and fellow-worker, Alexander Mackennal, of Bowdon. Dr. Mackennal had been Chairman of the Council of Mansfield College since the retirement of Dr. Dale. He was a man of singular sagacity and no little charm of manner. He had guided the affairs of the college with a steady hand, and Fairbairn had come to rely much on his judgment. He felt his loss very keenly, and missed in him not only a helper in his work, but a close personal friend. At the funeral in Bowdon Fairbairn delivered a deeply impressive address, dominated throughout by his own keen sense of sorrow. This he afterwards supplemented by the following letter to the *Examiner*:

"Sir: Kindly allow me to supplement on two points the few words spoken at the funeral service of Dr. Mackennal. That occasion was so solemn and so intimate that any reference to what might be considered external concerns was instinctively felt to be out of place. But I feel deeply that since we laid R. W. Dale to rest, our churches have experienced no such loss as they have now to mourn. Dr. Mackennal was a sagacious counsellor, a willing servant of all who had need of him, a man of extraordinary gifts, who was ready to give up his all for the good of our churches and the causes they stood for. It has been my privilege to know three or four men of whom this could be said of them all, namely that their moral integrity and wisdom surpassed their intellectual genius and weight. Macfadyen, Hannay, Dale, and Mackennal stand out as men of varying degrees of intellectual eminence, who yet all agreed in their common consecration to our evangelical faith, and their readiness to suffer and to labour on behalf of our churches. They belong to the very elect of our Christian religion, they were men whose services death came to reveal by showing us what we had lost. And in these respects no one of them excelled our lately lost friend. He served his Church as only a man who believed in its high destiny could. His religion was simple, but not bald; he disliked pretence in all its forms, ecclesiastical or civil, but he was too convinced a man to do other than respect conviction wherever it was to be found. It mattered not to him whether a cause was popular or unpopular, he only enquired, Does it love truth, stand for freedom, and promote religion? And if he found it did, it commanded his love and loyal service. His mind was stored with reminiscences of all the great movements of the last half century, and of the men who had led and embodied them. He understood as few men did the inter-relations of civil and religious freedom, the way in which the churches would best serve the State, and their need of independence and the absence of all hope of reward if they were to render to the State the highest service possible to them. To hear him speak as to church rates, as to education, as to Church and State, was to be instructed and illuminated by a master who had proved by experience the truth of what he said.

He knew no fear, and he courted no favour, and he was trusted as a leader because he was so respected as a man.

"The other question was one I could not touch, because it involved so many and such intimate, both personal and official, relations. Dr. Mackennal was one of the three men to whom Mansfield College owed its being, its organisation, and its success. The other two were Dr. Dale and Mr. Albert Spicer. From the moment of Dale's retirement until his own death Mackennal was the Chairman. He grudged neither time nor thought nor labour to its service. He travelled often and freely from Bowdon to Oxford or London in its interests. His courtesy, patience, and tact, though at times sorely taxed, never failed. All had the most ample confidence in his capacity, his judgment, his integrity. Whatever the question which emerged, whether connected with the constitution under which the college was to be worked, with an appointment to the staff, the examination or reception of candidates, it received from him a consideration and treatment which commanded universal respect. And his interest in the college, so far from lagging, increased with the years. Towards the end he had planned, in order to its fuller efficiency, more frequent meetings of the Board and the Council, and more immediate oversight of its work. He was one of the most open-minded of men, and one, too, of the most generous. So far as my knowledge extends, every man who met him had his idea of Christian chivalry, manhood, courtesy, and discretion raised and enhanced. Of all the institutions he served so willingly none will miss him more than Mansfield College. He believed in its ideals, and he laboured to make its practice more worthy of the ideal he thought so needful to the ministry and to the churches. We had grown to trust him, to lean upon him, and we mourn him to-day as a fallen leader, a strong tower into which the Church ran in times of danger and felt safe. Of all the causes poorer because of Mackennal's death, none will be more impoverished than our college, for to it he gave the wisdom of his maturer years, the riches of his large experience, and the strength of his unconquerable faith.

"I am yours, etc.,

"A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

Dr. Mackennal was a typical Congregational minister of his time, a man of culture and wide reading, grave, far-sighted, and devout. He had strong convictions, but he was able to respect the convictions of others, and in ecclesiastical matters showed something of the statesman's temper. While not a great preacher, he was one who obtained a marked influence over his hearers. He knew men and women, and could speak the word in season. During the long period of their association in the work of the college he influenced Fairbairn considerably by modifying his somewhat dominantly academic tendencies, and helping to keep the college in closer touch with the churches and with practical life. As may be seen from the letter quoted above, Fairbairn was never slow to acknowledge the debt which both he and the college owed to him.

This same year, 1904, also saw the completion of the scheme for the reconstruction of the Congregational Union, in the earlier stages of which, as we have seen, Fairbairn had taken some part. But he was not altogether satisfied with the way in which the scheme developed, and abstained from any share in the later discussions. He was not quite converted to the idea of a connexional Congregationalism, though he could not bring himself to oppose it. Much more interesting to him was the action of the House of Lords in the Scottish Church case. When in 1900 the Free Church of Scotland resolved to amalgamate with the United Presbyterian Church, and formed the United Free Church of Scotland, a small minority had stood out. About twenty-four ministers, representing mainly Gaelic congregations, appealed against the Union, and put in a claim, on doctrinal grounds, to be considered as the Free Church, and to hold the property of the Free Church. Their case was brought before two Scottish tribunals, and failed, but was successful with the House of Lords. The decision there given meant that this remnant of the Free Church (commonly called the Wee Frees)

was entitled to hold all the property originally possessed by the whole Free Church of Scotland. Fairbairn had been an enthusiastic supporter of the Union, and had taken part in the celebrations which marked its consummation. He was correspondingly dismayed by this almost grotesque sequel. He lectured on the subject at Oxford, dealing mainly with the theological issues involved, and arguing that there was a living continuity in the doctrinal position of the Free Church which made the Lords' decision wrong in equity, if justifiable according to the strict letter of the law.

Another matter in which Fairbairn was deeply interested came to a head during this same year. This was an attempt to remove the restrictions on theological examinerships in Oxford, and throw them open to others besides ordained members of the Church of England who were also members of Congregation, i.e. resident members of the University. The aim of those who promoted the change was to open the examinerships not only to those whom Dr. Sanday described as Academic Dissenters, but also to eminent Anglicans not in orders or not members of the University. The proposal was approved by Congregation, but thrown out by Convocation by an immense majority, and after only the semblance of a debate. The country clergy came up in hundreds to vote against it. Fairbairn took no part in the public discussions, but it was freely recognised that his work and that of his colleagues in Oxford had done much to increase the anomaly of the existing situation, and to pave the way for a change. The fact that Fairbairn was never allowed any share in the theological administration of the University must be put down, not to the University itself, but to those reactionary elements in the Church of England by which, under its antiquated constitution, the University is governed.

Among his literary activities during this year may be mentioned a long review in the *Examiner* of the second

edition of Professor James Ward's *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, which he commended as one of the best of the Gifford Lectures. Of the author he wrote :

" Now Prof. James Ward is a man of the sort that the theologian ought to make welcome within his province, for he is one from whom we all can learn. He is a man whose business it is to study the process and conditions and problems of knowledge, whose main function it is to relate the conscious reason to the rational universe, or the intelligent subject to the intelligible object it confronts and must interpret, especially by the interpretation of itself. And so he is one who must have thought on the mysteries that beset and perplex us all ; and he will certainly have reached conclusions he will be all the better for stating, and we the wiser for knowing. It is from this point of view that we welcome this book. The Professor has a grim humour of his own, a caustic wit, a lucid style, and a faculty of incisive criticism. His work is distinguished by ample knowledge, subtle analysis, rigorous argument, keen and dexterous dialectic. It may be said to bear the stamp not only of his thought but of his home. The environment has acted on his mind, and his mind has reacted on its environment. It is doubtful whether any metaphysician outside of Cambridge could have dealt as exhaustively and as intelligently with the terms and the ideas of modern physics. He has done them the honour of patient study, comprehensive knowledge, and thorough examination. And there is nothing in the whole book which does its author more credit or shows more clearly his caution and care as a thinker."

Other articles written during 1904 were one on Herbert Spencer in the *Contemporary Review* for January ; also reviews in the *Speaker* of the *Expositor's Greek Testament* and of the extra volume of Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, along with a paper on the Churches and Education in the *Pilot*, some extracts from which have already been quoted.

Of the article on Spencer Lord Bryce wrote to him :

" I have been reading your article on H. Spencer with great interest and profit. My own knowledge of his books is rather slender, for they were to me so dull that I could not get on with them, but so far as my knowledge extends, your judgment seems to me perfectly fair, perhaps slightly over-indulgent, but that is the best side to deviate on, especially in such a case as this. Of his work on its physical and generally on its scientific side I am not qualified to judge, but his contributions to the historical and sociological side of philosophy seem to me valueless, i.e. they add nothing except phrases and forms of classification to what we knew before. Jowett once said to me of his work, ' All rubbish.' Perhaps a harsh judgment, but nearer the truth than the praises of it we have lately been hearing. Your observations on his want of knowledge of what had been done before him are admirable. He has been boomed by some of the physical science people, not so much because they approve of his science, as because they like to disparage the older metaphysics, and by some of the agnostic school, because they want to disparage the part religion has played in the growth of philosophy and actually in history. What impressed me most of all in his writings, as compared with Hegel, was the want of fertility. He does not strike out helpful thoughts as he goes along. It is *mechanisch*, not *lebendig*. Am I right in so thinking ? "

Early in 1905 a Conference of Nonconformists took place in London on the working of the new Education Act. Fairbairn was to have been present, but was unable at the last moment to fulfil the engagement. He wrote the following letter, which was read at the meeting :

" I regret very much that I cannot possibly be present with you, after all, to-morrow. Particularly I wanted an opportunity to speak on the education question again, and especially to say—

" (1) A compromise on our cardinal positions is impossible. We must have (*a*) the management of the schools so open as to be really controlled by those who find the means for their maintenance, and (*b*) complete freedom of teachers ; a freedom not only from subscription

to, or membership of, a particular body, but from the irksome and irritating clerical control, which has up till now been the very bane of our educational system. It would cause me great regret to advocate the complete exclusion of sacred learning from our schools ; but if the option be its complete exclusion or the continued dominance of the clergy, I for one should have no hesitation as regards which is the preferable alternative.

" (2) We must be prepared to advocate a higher standard and better remuneration for the teachers. The low standard so far required by us in education from the teachers is possibly the bitterest price we have had to pay for continued clerical control.

" (3) We must, as regards counties, plead for a reduction of the area of administration. The county is too large, and the education committees have to be guided too much by local bodies. No single man who has other work to do in the world can know all the teachers or even all the schools of his own county, and he has to be guided purely by the local or managerial reports. This is bad for the school, it will be bad for any system, it is worst of all for education. We must therefore see to it that the education committees are made less than the county, though larger than the parish : only we must see that they are large enough to save them from being victims of local passions, and small enough to enable every individual member to know at first hand every separate school."

In the spring of the same year Fairbairn was appointed a delegate from the Congregational Union of England and Wales to the sister Union of Ireland, at which he preached the Union sermon and delivered an address on the ministry. He also paid a visit of inspection to the Theological Colleges of Wales in company with Principal (now Sir Harry) Reichel. In May he attended the meetings of the Congregational Union in London, and delivered a very characteristic address on John Knox. Knox was one of his heroes, and though he was by no means blind to his defects, and conscientiously painted him " warts and all," he left with his hearers an indelible impression

of one who was a great saint and scholar, and for his own time a veritable man of God. The address was delivered with great fire and humour, and ranks among the best of his public utterances. In the summer he was present at the garden party at Windsor given by the King and Queen on the occasion of the wedding of Princess Margaret of Connaught and Prince Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden. At the annual meetings of the college in the same year the Council gave him some much-needed assistance in his work by appointing Mr. T. M. Watt to lecture in the department of the Philosophy of Religion and Theism. Mr. Watt continued to hold this post until Fairbairn's retirement, and in many ways helped to relieve him.

The literary work of this year comprised a large number of reviews, together with articles on "The Miracles of Christ," "Books and How to Read Them," and Introductions to Prof. L. H. Jordan's *Comparative Religion* and Mr. E. O. Davies' *Theological Encyclopædia*.

The following letters belong to the period covered by this chapter:

*To Professor Peake.*

"My dear Peake, *February* 1, 1904.

"I have waited in the vain hope of getting a clear day in which to write to you and acknowledge many things. First and foremost, I am very grateful to you for sending me so early a copy of your most interesting and instructive Commentary on Colossians. I have read it almost quite through. With your Introduction I do not feel myself quite throughout as completely in sympathy as I did with your 'Hebrews,' which seems to me to be the most notable contribution in that whole series[1] to the study of the New Testament. I find the same care and scholarship in this new field, but it does not carry the same kind of conviction to me in the Introduction. I am not going to tell you why I differ, as it would take too long to discuss such things as the

[1] *The Century Bible.*

angelology of the Epistle : but I am certainly at present not inclined to find it in certain of the texts, notably those dealing with the 'κατὰ τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου.'

"I have also to thank you for sending me an outline of your most interesting lecture on Old Testament Criticism. I was delighted to find so lucid an account of it.

"As to the Sunday-afternoon lecture on the Resurrection, I congratulate you on its lucidity, its directness, its cogency. On the point you raise touching the evidence for the historicity of the transfiguration, I cannot recall any express discussion of it : though you will find two very interesting chapters in sections 34 and 35 of Hase's *Geschichte Jesu*. Please to look particularly at the three or four concluding paragraphs of the latter. You will also find an interesting discussion in *Keim*, Vol. 4 towards the end : and in *Weizsäcker*, Vol. 2, p. 37, there are also some very suggestive sentences. Your own point of view, as far as I can remember, is, however, quite original.

"I had intended to write to you about the proposed Faculty of Theology in the University. I hear they are going to give you an official status in it if you will accept it. Sanday and I together have been invited to come up as advisory members of the Theological Board or whatever it may be termed. We may be there together about the end of April or the beginning of May."

*To Joseph King, M.P.*

"*May* 18, 1904.

"I was sorry not to see you yesterday : but hardly sorry you were not present to see a most humiliating spectacle. The clerics created an uproar which would have disgraced savages and showed themselves to be the most ignorant of the read classes in England. They beat us by a handsome majority : but, at the same time, I did not mind being beaten by them, as they helped to make manifest that the most ignorant race in the community governs the University. And I am afraid that until our people do as you have done, keep their names on the books and come up when necessary, their

power will continue. Their reign would be ended to-morrow if all the men who refused to bow the knee to the policy of reaction, were to keep their names on the books and exercise their prerogatives in the University. We are governed in the last resort by a howling mob of Oxford Passmen simply because Classmen will not be at the trouble or the expense, or the two combined, to assume their functions."

# CHAPTER XII

## CLOSING YEARS

## 1906–1912

THE year 1906 opened amid the excitement and turmoil of a general election. Mr. Balfour's Government had appealed to the country, and before the year was a month old had experienced a crushing defeat. The main factors in securing the Liberal triumph were Free Trade, the conduct of the South African War, and the Education Act of 1902. In all of these the Nonconformists of the country were specially concerned. Their united and enthusiastic action on the Liberal side contributed not a little to the result. In this Fairbairn was altogether with them, although, of course, he took no active part in the contest. Indeed it was a matter of some regret to him that he was obliged to visit America in fulfilment of a long-standing engagement just when the election was at its height. The object of his visit was to deliver the Deems' Lecture in New York University. His subject was "The religion of Jesus Christ," and the lectures were intended to form a volume which should expand and complete the sketch of the subject given in the concluding pages of the *Philosophy of the Christian Religion*. The lectures excited a good deal of interest in America, and there was much disappointment there when it was found that the intention to publish them could not be carried out. During this visit, which was a very brief one, and occupied solely with the delivery of the lectures, Fairbairn stayed with his friend, Prof. Francis Brown, of Union Seminary.

To an interviewer he expressed himself freely on the subject of the political situation at home. He thought that the new Government had the confidence of the Nonconformists, but that it depended on their attitude to the Education question on the one hand, and to Tariff Reform on the other, whether they would keep it. Not long after his return Mr. Birrell introduced his Education Bill, only to have it rejected by the House of Lords. In reply to a correspondent who asked his opinion of it Fairbairn wrote :

" Your request last week for a word or two on the Education Bill came to hand too late to allow me to send it. A week additional may have given to many time for reflection ; but that has not been my experience. My thoughts have been elsewhere.

" Let me only say then : the Bill is evidence that our trust has not been misplaced. Our representatives have served us well, and deserve our thanks. Let us thank them in the way representatives most appreciate, and give them our cordial support.

" We ought also to feel that this is no Nonconformist measure. I have always protested that the State as a State should know no Church. I am an old-fashioned voluntary in the sense of believing that what is possible to me as a citizen may be impossible to any Church founded expressly that it may live for eternity and serve the ends of the eternal God. But in this case we have to do with an assembly full of men who think otherwise. Most of the men within the Cabinet do not here agree with us. Yet what they propose to give into our hands is an instrument which can be honestly used by us, as well as by believers in a national establishment. It will enable us to keep the priest outside the schools ; to set free their masters from sectarian tests ; to keep the souls of our children free and unstained in belief. These are the things for which we really cared ; once they are secured we can afford to be generous. Let us join hands with the men within the English Church who have helped in the early stages to elaborate so goodly a scheme, and

who may yet, to their still greater honour, help us to realise it. May I tell here an anecdote which certainly need not be enforced in your columns? A gentleman was, long before the General Election, speaking to an old pupil and dear friend of mine touching the change he even then foresaw—and it did not need omniscience to foresee it—and he said: 'We have been so long top dog and have worried you so well while you were underneath, that I cannot help wondering what will happen when the parts are reversed, you above and we below.' My friend, in his quiet way, replied simply: 'Well, I hope we won't be dogs and take you for the same; but act ourselves as men, and take you for gentlemen.' That is the only thing that becomes us; we must strenuously adhere to principle, but for the rest let us be generous Christian men.

"I do not think the Bill as it stands satisfactory. I do not believe that even the men who framed it think it is. I could have wished that it had been complete—we all believe in being 'thorough'—but what we have we know and can find out how to enforce, once we have got it enacted. The wit of man will fail to draw up a satisfactory settlement. While the parson is the vicar of the parish, he will live up to his legal status, even though to do so he must forget his spiritual duties. And he will renew the agitation for more power, even though his cry for 'more Church' may mean less religion. But don't let us raise false issues: the Bill may say nothing about denominational colleges, but it may deal all the more effectively with them. What prevents the teacher teaching a denominational religion, is death to the denominational colleges. I could have wished areas to be lessened; all schools made into thorough State institutions under the same safeguards that have been found necessary in Universities and colleges. But we cannot have all we wish; we are not framing a scheme to institute elementary education, but a Bill to regulate it. Let us stand by the Bill; and then see that no one steals from us the rights it gives."

In the discussion which raged round the provisions for religious teaching in the new Bill, Fairbairn did not take any great part. He attended a conference between

Nonconformists and some leading Anglicans which resulted in the issue of a manifesto declaring that "the instruction given in Holy Scripture should not be inconsistent with the Apostles' Creed, which represents the general consent of Christendom to the fundamental facts of the Christian religion." This was signed by Fairbairn along with Dr. Horton, Dr. Maclaren, Dr. Guinness Rogers, Mr. Meyer, Mr. Shakespeare, and Mr. Thomas Spurgeon. It was intended to allay the fears of those who thought that the Bill would tend to the complete secularising of education. It proved quite abortive, however, because it was seized upon by extremists on both sides as a sign of division in the Nonconformist ranks, instead of the eirenicon for which it was intended.

While the discussion on the Education Bill was proceeding the Government appointed a Royal Commission to consider and report on the condition of the Established Church in Wales, in order to prepare the way for a Bill for its Disestablishment and Disendowment. The Commission consisted of Lord Justice Vaughan Williams (chairman), Sir John Williams, Lord Hugh Cecil, Dr. Fairbairn, Archdeacon Owen Evans, Mr. S. T. Evans, M.P.,[1] Mr. Frank Edwards, M.P., Prof. Henry Jones,[2] Mr. J. E. Greaves, and Mr. W. M. Thomas. The terms of reference were, "To enquire into the origin, nature, amount, and application of the temporalities, endowments, and other properties of the Church of England in Wales and Monmouthshire, and into the provision made and work done by the churches of all denominations in Wales and Monmouthshire, for the spiritual welfare of the people, and the extent to which the people avail themselves of such provision, and to report thereon."

Fairbairn joined the Commission with some reluctance and only from a strict sense of duty. He was not convinced of its necessity, nor did he regard it as the best

[1] Now Sir Samuel Evans. [2] Now Sir Henry Jones.

way of preparing for the disestablishment measure which the condition of public opinion in Wales had, in his judgment, made inevitable. From the beginning he was not happy in the work. He did not approve of many things in the procedure of the Commission, and his feeling that it was not likely to produce any useful result led ultimately to his resignation. He was charged with partisanship in the attitude he took up, and with an unduly severe treatment of the Church of England witnesses. There is nothing in the published report of the Commission which would give colour to either of these charges. It is true that he showed himself very anxious to bring out the truth regarding the Nonconformist provision for religious and educational work in Wales, and that in dealing with the status and record of some of the Established Church clergy he showed his own very high standard of theological education in a way that might have seemed offensive to those who did not share his views. He did not, however, take a very prominent part in the examination of the witnesses. His questions to them were mainly directed towards elucidating points as to the order and beliefs of the Free Churches for the benefit of the Anglican Commissioners. He had also something to say as to the Theological Colleges of Wales, their relation to University education and to the improvement of theological knowledge among the Free Churches. But as the enquiry went on, he became more and more dissatisfied with it. It soon became evident that the decision of the Commissioners to sit and hear evidence in London not only restricted the nature of the evidence offered, but prevented them from obtaining that acquaintance with local conditions which was necessary in order to form any intelligent appreciation of the evidence. Under these terms the evidence tended to become more and more statistical. At the same time its value, even as such, was greatly lessened by the ruling of the President that no comparison between

the Churches was to be attempted, and no historical enquiry concerning them was to be permitted. The Commission thus resolved itself into an attempt to discover just what the Churches were, and were doing, at that particular time. It became a Commission not on the Established Church in Wales, but on all the Churches of Wales, and was occupied mainly with discovering perfectly well-known facts in regard to the Free Churches, though it was forbidden to use these in the only way in which they were relevant, viz. as a means of comparison with the Anglican Church.

Fairbairn felt that it was not for such a purpose as this that he had joined the Commission. He tried in vain, both on the Commission and outside it, to turn the enquiry into more fruitful channels, and when he found that the task was hopeless, he wrote the following letter to the Right Hon. D. Lloyd George, resigning his position :

" *November* 28, 1907.

" Dear Mr. Lloyd George,

" I feel that I must resign my seat on the Welsh Commission appointed to enquire into the spiritual provision made by all denominations for the ' spiritual welfare of the people of Wales.' I deeply regret to do so : but I have no option. My reasons are many, but they may all be summed up in this—my inability to consent to the mode either in which the enquiry is conducted or in which it is restricted. We have done our utmost to have the enquiry changed in both respects, but have laboured to do so in vain. I have therefore determined to retire. Kindly accept the same,

" Ever yours,

" A. M. Fairbairn."

His resignation was accompanied by those of Sir Samuel Evans and Sir Henry Jones, both of whom felt as he did in the matter. All this was accomplished not

without friction and unpleasantness. Fairbairn said to the present writer that, if he had been a younger man, he would have stayed on and fought the thing through. But he was feeling his years, and neither his strength nor his patience were equal to the strain.

Amid all these varied activities Fairbairn continued to carry on his work at Mansfield College, and to this we must now return. On the death of Dr. Mackennal his place, as Chairman of the College Council, was filled by Mr. A. W. W. Dale (now Sir Alfred Dale), the Vice-Chancellor of Liverpool University. Certain changes also took place on the staff of the college. Dr. Massie retired and gave himself to political work, and Mr. Souter[1] became Yates Professor of New Testament. Mr. Lenwood had previously been appointed to assist Dr. Massie, and to act as College Pastor to the younger Nonconformists in the University. This appointment greatly helped to relieve Fairbairn of some of his social work. At the same time he never relaxed his efforts in behalf of the college, and to his foresight and care is due the excellence of its equipment both in material resources and other ways. As we have already seen, after the death of Dr. Dale a fund was raised to perpetuate his memory in connection with the college. By this means the Dale memorial lectureship was founded, and has already been the means of producing some notable work. The first lecturer was Mr. T. R. Glover, of Cambridge, and his lectures form his well-known book *The Conflict of Religions in the Early Roman Empire.* He was followed by Sir William Ramsay, of Aberdeen, with a series of lectures on "The Influence of Greek and Asiatic Cities on the Life and Work of St. Paul," and more recently Dr. E. C. Moore, of Harvard, has lectured on "The Expansion of Christendom and the Naturalisation of Christianity in the Orient in the Nineteenth Century."

[1] Now Dr. Souter, Professor of Humanity at Aberdeen University.

The following letters show the keen interest Fairbairn took in this matter. The first of them refers to the appointment of Sir Alfred Dale as the first Dale Lecturer, an appointment which he was not able to accept.

*To Sir Alfred Dale.*

"*May* 5, 1900.

"At our Council meeting on Monday last you were unanimously appointed the first Dale Lecturer. I hope you will see your way to acceptance of this appointment which we all feel to be so fit. I could not convey to you an idea of the warm and cordial feeling which the whole Council entertained on the matter. We do not contemplate the delivery of the lectures for at least a couple of years, and you would have all that time to prepare. We should expect the lectures to be delivered in Oxford and to be published as Dale Lectures, but everything pertaining to the lecturer's rights and titles would be your own. As to subject, we felt it were better to leave that to be suggested by yourself. You would know the direction in which your aptitudes and feelings pointed, and whether it were in early or in more recent Church history, especially as concerns our own order of Churches, we should be well content to be guided by your own choice. I think, on the whole, the earlier time has been, if not overdone, very thoroughly done, while more recent questions have been only partially and perfunctorily touched."

*To the same.*

"*February* 28, 1905.

"I have received the enclosed from Glover as a scheme of his lectures, and I do not want to write to him until you have seen it. Can you suggest anything? To me numbers 6–8 contain no reference to Roman Jurisprudence. While the Jurists were so profoundly influenced by Stoicism, and in their turn profoundly influenced Christian doctrine and thought, the tendency, so far as I know, is to emphasise eclecticism in religion rather

than the continuity of thought, while Tertullian, for example, is Stoical in the basis of his mind and manages to incorporate under the forms of his Juristic theology a great deal of the contemporary thinking. I would like, before the scheme is finally fixed in Glover's mind, to have a talk with him, especially on the intellectual side of things, i.e. the side of the thought which seems to me never to have had justice done it. Roman Stoicism did much to provide Christianity with a doctrinal basis; Greek Stoicism to provide it with an exegetical method; and I desiderate in Glover's scheme, as it stands outlined here, this connection between the systems and the religion. It is curious indeed that Greek Stoicism should have come in through the schools of Alexandria and North-East Africa, and Roman through the schools of Carthage and North-West Africa; the tongues, the local environment, the men, and the society all differ. There are only three more Sundays in this term. Would you be up here any approaching week-end, when I could ask Glover to come over? If so we could have the whole question considered and discussed."

*To the same.*

"*October 22*, 1906.

"If Ramsay develops the position he has stated, 'a study of the influence of the Græco-Asiatic cities and societies on the thought and religion of Paul,' he will, I think, take another view of the matter than is presented in the merely archæological papers he has contributed to the *Expositor* on the Pauline cities. These papers may be used as giving a background or setting to the subject, but as doing no more. It would, I think, be perfectly open to us to object to the serving up of mere archæology in connection with our lectureship: but if Ramsay—and I have the utmost confidence in him—will break fresh ground, and deal with a thing so material as the subject he suggests, then I have not only no objection to so excellent a theme, but think also that it will give new dignity and meaning to the lecture.

"My views are essentially those of Bartlet, who is the only

man to whom I have had the opportunity of speaking. But the matter in the Epistles, as well as in the Acts, is valuable and important: and I know nothing in the history of the New Testament that seems at once so full of promise and so needed as the subject which Ramsay states in his letter to you. You will understand how the subject shapes itself in my mind, and I am sure in other minds than mine."

Fairbairn also spent much time and pains on completing the external equipment of the college. He was successful in obtaining large gifts for endowment, for the founding of scholarships, for the library, and for the adornment of the building, every stone of which he loved. Memorial funds raised in honour of Dr. Mackennal and Dr. Charles Berry, of Wolverhampton, were applied, the former to endowing the Chair of ecclesiastical history, and the latter to founding a scholarship which should be open to members of all the Free Churches. He received, too, a large sum of money to establish the Nathan Whitley travelling scholarships "to assist deserving students to travel in Italy, Greece, Egypt, or Syria with a view to general culture and stimulus to study"—a unique and extraordinarily useful benefaction. In 1902 the late Lord Winterstoke built for the college a porter's lodge at the outer gate, and in 1906 the same generous donor provided a sum of money to be spent on a series of stained-glass windows in the chapel. The arranging of the subjects for these windows and their proper historical treatment was a matter which especially appealed to Fairbairn. He regarded it as the last work which he would do for his college, and he did it with a thoroughness and a knowledge which were altogether characteristic. The following are but a selection from the large number of letters which he wrote on the subject, and they have a special interest of their own.

*To Sir Alfred Dale.*

"*December* 10, 1906.

"I enclose the scheme I would suggest for the windows. The general idea is 'the history of the Church,' with a window sacred to either a period or a society. If you have any changes to suggest either as to the general scheme or the special names here given, I shall be delighted to have them. I want to keep as far as possible, where we can have historical figures, to historical, i.e. portrayed, persons. No one elsewhere represented in the college is included in the enclosed. This must explain such very singular omissions as Augustine, Athanasius, Origen, or among the Reformers Luther, Calvin, and Knox, or among the Puritans and Independents Milton and Bunyan. These have all places elsewhere."

*To the same.*

"*January* 11, 1907.

"I return to you the draft of names for the windows, with some changes, which I hope will meet with your approval. The names you specified, i.e. Athanasius, Augustine, Luther, Bunyan, Wesley, are represented by statues in our chapel. We have also John Milton. Erasmus and Buchanan are both inserted. I have substituted Bradford for Richard Mather, the grandfather. He was an old Oxford man and originally connected with B.N.C.; that was the only reason why he should be included, though, as Bradford is a layman among Divines, I would like him to appear if possible. Much will depend on our being able to find good portraits of each of them, for I remember we had that difficulty with John Robinson. Can you suggest a substitute for Ward Beecher? I would like to keep him out, and put him in only because I recollected that your father once said to me that he was the greatest preacher the Church had possessed since Chrysostom. I have substituted Angell James for Robinson, and I think Birmingham would be pleased, especially as he had so much to do with the founding of Spring Hill. With you I felt the difficulty

about Schleiermacher, but he is as much a Nonconformist from the English point of view as either John Brown, of Haddington, or Thomas Chalmers. You will see that I have struck out Cyprian and inserted Jerome. I do so for the reason that Jerome is a scholar and more easily recognised than would be Cyprian."

*To the same.*

"*March* 12, 1908.

"I have had some correspondence with Dr. Amory Bradford as to portraits of Governor Bradford and John Robinson. I enclose his letter along with other things. I think we may very well substitute Winslow for Bradford. But whom shall we put in the place of John Robinson? There certainly is a good portrait of Richard Mather, the only early American who was connected with Oxford, and he might be substituted for Robinson. The other portraits we cannot get are first, Melville. I applied to Dr. McCrie, whose grandfather you will know by reputation, and he said that no portrait of Melville was known. He suggested in his place that of Henderson, and said that as the real author of the second reformation in Scotland he was a greater man than Andrew Melville. This just shows how little he appreciated our point of view, which was the getting of a man academically eminent as well as eminent as a Reformer. Melville was great for the reason that he, more than any man, had to do with the organisation of Greek studies in Scotch Universities. While McCrie suggests Henderson, Sanday urges Usher, and thinks that as a scholar and friend of the Westminster Assembly he is a proper person to insert. But I would suggest in place of these two either John Cameron, who was Principal of the University of Glasgow, author of various books that I need not trouble you about, and helped to found the school of Saumur; or Robert Baillie, also Principal of Glasgow, a contemporary of Henderson's, and sent with him to the Westminster Assembly, though he is much later than either Cameron or Henry Barrow. Nor also, secondly, can there be found any portrait of Henry Barrow, though numbers

exist of Isaac, and it was Isaac Barrow that the Powells[1] had found. For him we could substitute Robert Browne, and as there has been a good deal of agitation about him, we might have him. With regard to John Robinson, I also communicated with a descendant of his, but was referred by her to a man in Boston whom I did not know, and therefore did not care to approach."

*To the same.*

"*May* 18, 1908.

"I am still searching for portraits, but find it easier to promise to find them than actually to get them. I have not yet found a portrait of Robert Browne, so that he must be knocked out. I am going to propose in his place a better man—Penry. There are thus three portraits needed still, and I have informed Powell that I am dissatisfied with his search at the British Museum, where I intend to go myself on Friday. The three are Barrow, Browne, and Penry, though Browne may for all purposes be knocked out. That leaves only two which I must seek in the Print Room of the British Museum. I am going up expressly to do that on Friday.

"Another name I intend to ask your permission to substitute is Dr. Legge for Reynolds. He was not only eminent as a missionary, but also for his knowledge of Chinese and the part he took in connection with Mansfield. That will enable us to keep the balance and to have a window with two great Nonconformist missionaries, Livingstone and Legge, with Binney in the middle, while in the lower portion of the window we have Hannay, Dr. Dale, and Dr. Mackennal. These are, I think, the only things in connection with the windows I need bother you about. If you kindly consent to the last alteration, I promise to make no other. Only I have to suggest in the American window, where we have Winslow and Roger Williams, William Penn be substituted for John Robinson, as no portrait can be found of him."

[1] Messrs. Powell and Sons, the firm to whom the execution of the windows had been entrusted.

*To the same.*

"*May* 23, 1908.

"Thanks for your letter. I have to say (1) that Dr. Legge is all right. (2) I have hunted for Robinson, Browne, Penry, and Barrow through the Hope Collection here and in the British Museum, and have failed to find in either place any portrait. I have also gone over books of portraits, but cannot find anything that can be suggested as a substitute. The only names that occur to me are Peter Martyr, also known as Vermigli, a Florentine, who was also a good Protestant as well as an honest and earnest Reformer: sat in a theological chair at Oxford: was defended by Cranmer: had a real influence over certain English Reformers, notably Ridley, who stayed with him, and Latimer; while his wife, who died in Oxford and was buried here, was cast out of her grave by Richard Martial, Queen Mary's special Dean of Christ Church. The others are John Foxe, the martyrologist, and Bishop Hooper. One of these, I take it, we must accept, and I, personally, give my vote to Peter Martyr, who represents both England and the Continent. (3) I came upon an excellent portrait of Penn in the British Museum, better than the one I found in Oxford. He is a good sort of man and, along with Mrs. Fry, a Friend. These are the only two Friends we have in the windows, and they contributed not a little to the development of Nonconformity in England, though Penn comes under America and stands in the American window."

In 1908 Lord Morley became Chancellor of the University of Manchester, and Fairbairn was one of those whom he selected to receive an honorary degree at his inauguration. He was presented for the D.D. degree by Dr. Peake, Dean of the Theological Faculty, who spoke as follows:

"It is with singular pleasure that I present, for the first degree of Doctor of Divinity conferred in this University, my former teacher and colleague Dr. Fairbairn. His services to theological science time would fail barely to

enumerate. With a profound belief in the trustworthiness of reason and the rationality of history, it has been the main passion of his life to understand and interpret religion. Intimately acquainted with the comparative study of the various forms it has assumed and with the course of philosophical speculation, he has risen from the mass of intricate detail to large and luminous generalisations in the philosophy of religion. An alien in no part of the dominion ruled by the queen of sciences, he has been especially distinguished as an exponent of historical and constructive theology. Himself a preacher whose sermons have been characterised by solidity and depth of thought and by a massive and inspiring eloquence, he has laboured to create a learned ministry, with an adequate technical equipment, based on a broad and generous culture. Of this, Mansfield College will be his enduring monument. He did much to frame the scheme of theological studies in the University of Wales, and we gratefully remember the help he gave us in our own similar enterprise. He will pass into his retirement followed by the gratitude of many who owe much to his writings, and with the warmer and deeper affection of those who date a new epoch in their lives from the time when they sat in his classroom and came under his influence. It will be their desire that as the evening closes in after his strenuous day he may find it a season of tranquillity, brightened by many memories and by the assurance of the place he holds in the hearts of all his pupils."

During the years 1907 and 1908 Fairbairn's health was not good. He was feeling increasingly the burden of his years and labours. He now preached less frequently, and his literary output was much diminished. He wrote occasional reviews, mainly of books by personal friends, and in 1907 he published in the *Contemporary* a chapter of autobiography which contained a most interesting account of his early theological struggles and development. Several extracts from this article[1] have appeared in their place earlier in this volume. In his conversation, and even in public, his mind turned constantly to his

[1] See p. 37 foll.

earlier days, and he was never so full of reminiscence or so ready to talk of his ancestry as at this time. As old men often do, he lived much in the past, and he entertained the hope of writing a complete autobiography—a hope which was never fulfilled. He carried on his college work to the last, lecturing as usual, and maintaining his keen interest in his men and their welfare. As his years told upon him, he became more masterful and even autocratic in his methods, but nothing diminished his enthusiasm for his work. At the same time he began to feel that his work at the college was done, and most reluctantly he made up his mind to retire. In doing so he acted from a real sense of duty and in what he believed to be the best interests of his beloved college. In a letter to Sir Alfred Dale, he wrote: "The idea of resignation is not welcome to me, but the good of the college, which weighs with me, stands high above all personal considerations. And I do honestly think it calls for this last sacrifice." It was indeed a sacrifice, for his very life was bound up with the institution he had done so much to make and of which he was so great a part. But, once his mind was made up as to his duty in the matter, he carried it through unflinchingly. At the annual meeting of the trustees and subscribers of the college held at Oxford on June 19, 1908, the following letter to Sir Alfred Dale was read:

"MANSFIELD COLLEGE,

"DEAR MR. VICE-CHANCELLOR, "*June* 8, 1908.

"I write to you as Chairman of the Council to give notice of my intention to retire from the Principalship of the college, the resignation to take effect either at Christmas, 1908, or at Easter, 1909, according as is found most convenient. I have decided on this step because I feel that the time has come when it will be best for the college that I should hand over the reins to younger hands, and I feel less hesitation in doing so, as the burden that I seek

to lay down is the burden not of failure but of success. It is now twenty-three years since I assumed charge of Mansfield, and twenty-two since the first stones of its buildings were laid. The college has lived long enough to prove the wisdom of those who built it. At this moment its reputation stands higher than ever before ; it has more students than at any past period in its history ; its sons can be reckoned amongst the foremost men of the colleges and Free Churches of England ; and its influence is acknowledged in the University as well as in the country at large. The congregations in the chapel on Sundays are steady, the preaching is excellent, the services as a rule are honourable to the simple faith and worship of our churches. When the college was founded in Oxford there were many things which gave cause for anxiety, but these were all overcome through the generous policy of the Council and the loyal co-operation of the men associated with me. I can therefore hand over my responsibilities in the full confidence that the wisdom which helped in the past will not fail in the future. Nor must I forget the generous support accorded by the churches and congregations and friends throughout the land. Our treasurer has in consequence been enabled to maintain these beautiful buildings free from debt from the moment of their completion. Even as I write, the simple beauty of the chapel is being enhanced by the addition of a series of windows illustrating in colour the history of the Church ; and this in itself, as marking the completion of the buildings within and without, is a source of great gratification. The saddest and most painful part of this letter is to take farewell of the Council and the Board and of my colleagues who have served the college so well. If anything could make the parting less hard, it is the memory of the generous help which has been given me, and for which I take this opportunity of expressing my grateful thanks. With every prayer to God on your behalf, as on behalf of our dear college,

" I am,

" Your grateful and obedient servant,

" A. M. FAIRBAIRN."

This letter was briefly but suitably acknowledged by the meeting, and a fuller consideration of it was postponed until after the resignation should have taken effect. Fairbairn ultimately decided to give up his post at Easter, 1909. During the last nine months at Oxford he took a deep interest in the work of the committee which had been appointed to select his successor, but he declined to take any part in their deliberations or to do or say anything which might influence their choice. He was also much occupied with arrangements for the disposal of his splendid library. He realised that it was far too large to take with him to any other home that he might find. He intended that ultimately it should be left to the college, but he could not bear the thought of parting with the whole of it at once. In the end an arrangement was made by which the college took over the bulk of the theological books, with the understanding that they were not to be merged in the general library during Fairbairn's lifetime, so that he might have free access to them. At the same time he selected a large number of those that he needed and was generally accustomed to use, and took them away with him, some to his house at Lossiemouth, and others to his son's house at Hagley. After his death all the books were added to the college library, with the exception of some duplicates and a few others of no interest or value. This was the finest gift of the kind that the college ever received. Fairbairn's collection of theological works was probably one of the best in any private library in the country. It was especially rich in French and German writers, and in the departments of the history and philosophy of religion. It contained also an immense collection of bound pamphlets on theological, educational, and ecclesiastical matters of the greatest interest and value. The books are all marked with his name, and form a lasting and most characteristic memorial of the man and his work. Nor is it the only one. A few months before his resignation took

effect, on November 4, 1908, some of his old students signalised Fairbairn's seventieth birthday by presenting him with a *Festschrift* in the form of a volume of essays, written in his honour and dedicated to him in the following terms :[1]

"DEAR DR. FAIRBAIRN,

"Some of us who have studied and taught in Mansfield College during the twenty-two years that have passed since you became the first Principal, desire to mark the occasion of your seventieth birthday by a series of essays which we would gladly associate with your name and the name of the college. Other unity we have not aimed at than this, that the essays and studies should fall within that broad and generous conception of theology and religion for which you have always stood. We have not sought to secure for the series any kind of completeness, or attempted to deal with all the chief branches of theological study ; but we have each of us written upon some subject that was at

[1] The book was published by Messrs. Hodder and Stoughton, and the contents of it are as follows :

Calvin in his Letters, by Rev. C. S. Horne ; The Religious Principle of Congregationalism, by Rev. W. B. Selbie ; The Eucharist in the Early Church, by Prof. J. V. Bartlet ; The New Testament Doctrine of Atonement in the Light of the Historico-Critical Method, by Prof. H. T. Andrews ; The Person of Christ in the Revelation of John, by Prof. A. S. Peake ; English Versions and the Text of the Old Testament, by Prof. G. B. Gray ; The Constant and the Contingent in Economics, by Rev. W. Reason ; the Celts of Galatia, by Prof. E. Anwyl ; The Nature of Religious Knowledge and the Certainty of Christian Faith, by Rev. Principal A. E. Garvie ; Final Christianity—Some Results of the Historico-Critical Method in the Study of Religion, by Rev. D. McFadyen ; The "Forty Traditions" in Islam, by Rev. G. W. Thatcher ; The Conception of Personality in Theology, by Rev. A. N. Rowland ; The Idea of Salvation in the Theology of the Eastern Church—a Study in the History of Religion, by Rev. R. S. Franks ; Hebrew Psychology in Relation to Pauline Psychology, by Prof. H. W. Robinson ; The Holy Spirit as Wisdom, by Prof. T. Rees ; The New Apologetic in India, by Rev. F. Lenwood ; Religion and Philosophy—a Study in the Groundwork of a Religious Conception of the World, by Rev. T. M. Watt ; Progress in the Textual Criticism of the Gospels since Westcott and Hort, by Prof. A. Souter ; and a Bibliography of Fairbairn's writings, by Mr. R. K. Evans.

the time engaging his special attention, giving the preference, so far as might be, to subjects in which it seemed possible to make some contribution to theological scholarship, without at the same time limiting interest in the essays to a few only of the many who have long turned to your own works as to those of a theologian and religious leader. Within the time that has elapsed since the volume was projected it has not been possible for all those to co-operate who would willingly have done so. In spite of these limitations, we trust that the essays, which will be found arranged in the order in which the several writers first became personally connected with you, may form some not altogether inadequate memorial of the range of theological scholarship represented in our college life during your tenure of the Principalship. Trusting that many years of fruitful study may still lie before you, we remain, in grateful remembrance of the past,

"Ever yours,

"THE WRITERS."

The presentation was made to Fairbairn privately on the afternoon of his birthday. The state of his health rendered any public ceremony undesirable. Some half-dozen of those responsible for the volume, deputed by the rest, gathered in Fairbairn's study and tried to tell him very briefly something of their affection and regard. It was rather a pathetic business. They met under the shadow of the impending resignation, and all were conscious that it meant something like the closing of an epoch in their lives. They had looked to this man for guidance, teaching, and inspiration since their student days. In his place at Mansfield he had been to them like a strong tower, and it was hardly possible to think of him without the college, or of the college without him.

Fairbairn, too, felt it. But he spoke brightly, with all his old affection for his men as he dwelt upon the past, and hopefully as to the future. He keenly appreciated the volume of essays and all that it stood for, and could

have desired no more fitting commemoration of his work.

Another presentation which greatly pleased him was a gift from the college servants. His relations with them had always been happy and cordial, and their spokesman, W. Collins, had been with him ever since the college was opened.

Before he left Oxford a farewell dinner was given to him by some twenty members of the University who had been most nearly connected with him. The matter was arranged by Prof. Gardner and Mr. Sidney Ball, and the dinner was held in St. John's College Common Room on March 8, 1909. The Rector of Exeter, Dr. W. W. Jackson, was in the chair, and Fairbairn was accompanied by his friend, Sir Albert Spicer. The chairman proposed the health of the guest and dwelt upon the feelings with which Fairbairn was regarded in Oxford on account of his personal qualities both as a friend and as a companion, and as the representative of Mansfield College and its work at Oxford. Few new-comers in Oxford, he said, had won their way so quickly to universal esteem and regard. In Exeter College he had been specially valued for his social gifts and conversational powers. He had also contributed a very pleasant element to the society of the Common Room by introducing to them many among his friends of high distinction, especially in the academic and literary world. Dr. Fairbairn, the Rector added, had amply carried out the ideal which he had set before himself and Mansfield College on its opening day. He had made it a home of theological learning and study. His own literary achievements were of the highest order, and he had quickly gathered a band of capable students about him. Mansfield men had won more than their share of University distinctions and some of them, as mature students, were doing admirable work. The college had materially contributed to broaden the conception of theological learning and to strengthen

its position in the University. Dr. Fairbairn would carry with him into his retirement the regard and affection of a large number of friends and the gratitude and esteem of the University.

To these words Fairbairn made a kindly and sympathetic reply, speaking of his life in Oxford with emotion which could scarcely be repressed.[1]

Fairbairn left Oxford in the Easter vacation of 1909. He did not settle down again in any permanent home, but for the remainder of his days spent his summers at Lossiemouth and his winters with his youngest son at Hagley or with his daughters in London. His mental activity was as great as ever, though his bodily powers were much impaired and his memory showed some signs of failure. He continued to take a keen interest in the affairs of the college and in public events, and had many plans for further literary work. All that he was able to accomplish of these, however, was the republication in book form of some of his earlier lectures and addresses. These he had begun to revise before he left Oxford with the help of Mr. Percy Matheson, of New College. They were issued in 1910 in a large volume entitled *Studies in Religion and Theology*. It comprised, not only the addresses above mentioned, but also a number of chapters on the teaching of Christ and on the work and ideas of St. Paul and St. John. The Preface opens with the following characteristic confession :

" ' Studies ' is to me an old and familiar friend in the title of a book. I remember submitting a question, directly suggested by a first literary project, to a Professor, who later became Principal in a northern University—viz. what name would he give to a book made up of *scientific* attempts to conceive and represent formulated ideas, not, indeed, according to their place in a system, but in the isolation which was independence ?

[1] The dinner was, of course, a purely private function. The above account of it is supplied by the kindness of Prof. Gardner and Dr. Jackson.

Without hesitation the answer came back: 'Would call it "Studies." And when years later a kindred question was submitted, a kindred answer was returned. The name was not intended to qualify the ideas interpreted, but the attempt at their interpretation: and was equal to essay in the old sense, better represented by 'assay' than by any modern term. This does not denote a 'written composition shorter and less elaborate than a treatise,' but simply an attempt to examine the ideas by their interpretation. And this is the meaning which is attached to the word 'Studies.'"

To the addresses in the earlier part of this book we have already referred in connection with the occasions on which they were delivered. The later chapters cover ground which Fairbairn had trod before in some of his earlier writings, and he takes the opportunity in them to modify and expand some of his previous views. He writes with much of his old vigour and eloquence, and the work shows no diminution either of power or interest.

This was, however, the only work which Fairbairn was able to complete during the few years of his retirement. He had various other plans, but none of them matured. Much of his time was spent in reading or being read to, but his bodily infirmity gradually increased and he became less and less capable of any prolonged mental effort. As any form of walking exercise became more and more difficult, he took very kindly to motoring and enjoyed long rides, whether in Scotland, the Midlands, or in London. On one of these, on a cold day in February, 1912, he took a chill, which developed into pneumonia. After a few days' illness, very quietly and patiently borne, he passed away. As long as he retained consciousness he was anxious to assure those around him that he was comfortable and happy, and his end was peace.

The funeral took place at Oxford on February 13. There was a service in the college chapel conducted by

his old pupils and colleagues. It was attended by a large number of old Mansfield men from all over the country, by the Vice-Chancellor and the proctors, the Mayor and Sheriff, many heads of houses, and other senior members of the University. He was buried in Wolvercote cemetery near to his old friend Dr. Legge, and a great cross of Aberdeen granite now marks the place where he lies.

The following address was delivered at the funeral service by the writer of this book :

" We are met here to-day in order that we may render a last tribute of affection and reverence to a great teacher and a beloved friend, and that we may give thanks unto God for the great gift of his life. It is well that we should meet to do so in this building, which so largely expresses, in outward and visible form, the ideals for which he strove, and every corner of which is redolent with his memory. But the real memorial of Dr. Fairbairn will never be in any building made with hands. It is to be found in ' lives made better by his presence,' in the faith and work of a great company of men in colleges and country villages, in suburbs and slums, in India and China, and by the Southern Seas, who once sat at his feet here, and who owe to him the best and most lasting inspiration of their lives.

" This is not the time or place to speak of Dr. Fairbairn's career in any detail. One may think of him as coming from a humble Scottish home, a boy taught to endure hardness, and showing at a very early age his passion for books and learning. He studied at Edinburgh and in Germany, and there, and in his first pastorate at Bathgate, he set himself to become a theologian. It was no easy task at that time. His breadth of vision and independence of mind were already marked, and had cast him loose from the traditions of his upbringing. He had to carve out a new way for himself, and it was not without heart-searching and many doubts and fears that the work was accomplished. There was always something of ' Sturm und Drang ' about Dr. Fairbairn's theology. It gave the impression of having been wrought out in the

crucible of experience. It was, if I may use words which I first heard from his lips, like

> 'Iron dug from central gloom
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered with the shocks of doom
> To shape and use.'

It was this that made him so attractive to younger men—the sense that he was not speaking by rote or from the book, but out of a knowledge that had been won at a great cost and was all his own. He set himself to do battle with the forces of prejudice and doubt in the glow and passion of a living faith. And it was this again, rather than his equipment of vast learning, that gave him the victory. He found our theology in his day insular, narrow, and dogmatic. He brought it out into the main stream of European thought, and used his philosophy of history the better to interpret the Christian faith. He taught men that religion was a universal force, and man's capacity for God a thing native to his soul. And he taught what he had himself learned, that

> 'The love of God is broader
> Than the measures of man's mind.'

He helped to deliver English theology from its fear of German speculation, and to relate it to philosophy on the one hand and to historical criticism on the other. These are familiar things to us now, but then they showed the man who did them to be a pioneer indeed.

"From Bathgate Dr. Fairbairn moved to Aberdeen, and, after a brief and wonderful ministry there, was called to preside over the Airedale Theological College at Bradford. It was in the fitness of things that he should become a teacher of theology, and at Bradford he found full scope for his powers, and began the life-work which Mansfield crowned and completed. His devotion to this college was extraordinary. He watched the building grow, he busied himself with its many adornments, and was bent upon making it worthy of Oxford. The college became part of his very life, and he spent his strength

upon it all too lavishly. He had the loftiest possible conception of the Christian ministry, and he was determined to give to his students the best modern equipment for so high a vocation. Whatever else might go, the standard of scholarship must always be kept up, and only those whom he has trained to share his labours, and to take up his burden after him, know how hard it is to follow the example which he set. But his work was by no means confined to his college. The cause of theological learning in this country owes him a great debt. It is measured not merely by his own writings, but by the part he took in founding the new theological faculty in Wales, and in shaping those of London and Manchester. In all these cases men whom he had trained here had a share in the work, and the methods they adopted and the ideals they sought to carry out were very largely his.

"I well remember his first coming to Oxford, and the immediate effect he produced on the minds of younger men. His public lectures were a revelation to us. His use of the historical method, his philosophical grasp, the vast range of his learning, the acuteness of his criticism and the sanity of his judgments, the rugged and passionate style of his oratory, and, above all, the intense earnestness and deep conviction of the man, produced an indelible impression on those who heard him. He brought to us a new and larger conception of what Christianity might mean. He helped us to see in theology, indeed, the queen of the sciences, and to relate it to those philosophical studies which had often led us far away from faith. He faced the prevalent Agnosticism of the time with a masterly apologetic, and put new hope and courage into many a doubting soul.

"Of what he was to his own students it is very difficult to speak. He admitted us to intimacy, and shared with us the gracious sanctities of his home. Walks and talks with him are among the never-to-be-forgotten incidents of our student days. He was more than a teacher, he was a veritable father in God. Even when we had left Oxford far behind, it was the natural thing to return and consult him in any crisis of our affairs. And we never found him fail us. His care and affection for his pupils never ceased. When I visited him a few weeks ago his

last word to me was, 'Remember me to the men.' His work in Oxford was altogether congenial, and he learned to love the place. He was grateful for the reception he met with here, and for the great help given him by Dr. Jowett, the Master of Balliol, by Edwin Hatch, and by many others who are still with us. He recognised to the full the advantages which Oxford has to offer, and with rare skill and insight he adapted the work of this college to the requirements of the place. He formed here many happy friendships, and himself contributed not a little to the social and intellectual life of the University. And all the time he was doing much work outside. He served on two Royal Commissions, and on various other public bodies. He held lectureships in Scotland, America, and India. He wrote constantly, and his writings indicate the wide and catholic range of his interests. He preached almost every week, and was occupied continually with the care of all the churches. And in all he showed the same master-mind, and the same devotion to the cause of truth and righteousness.

"It must not be forgotten that Dr. Fairbairn was a great preacher. He had the gift of adapting his religious and even his theological message to popular audiences. I have seen great congregations sitting spellbound under the rush and passion of his speech, and listening almost breathlessly to the most intricate argumentation. But he was perhaps at his best in an audience of simple village folk. What he could do with such as these showed the real greatness and simplicity of the man. I remember once finding that he had preached to some Methodist fishermen on the east coast. When I asked one of them what they thought of him, the answer was, 'He did talk to we like an angel.' He believed in preaching, and in the power of the living word. It was to him the noblest of vocations, and he would spare no pains to make men worthy of it.

"Then, again, he was a great Free Churchman. He had the blood of the Scottish Covenanters in his veins, and with him religious liberty was a passion. He loved the Puritans and understood them. He was content with the plainest and most austere forms of worship—the thinnest veil between the human soul and God. In England he identified himself whole-heartedly with the

Congregational Churches, and spent himself freely in their service. He accepted such limitations as this involved, and at all times had the courage of his ecclesiastical convictions. He did more than any one man to raise the standard of ministerial education and efficiency in the churches of his adoption.

"May I refer you now, in conclusion, to those three great sayings which Dr. Fairbairn chose many years ago as mottoes for this college, and which may equally well be taken to sum up the meaning of his own life and work? 'Deus locutus est nobis in Filio.' This was the central thought of his theology, and the guiding principle of his life, the word of God to the heart of man in Jesus. It was on the consciousness of God in Jesus Christ, the centre of humanity, and the revelation of the Eternal that his own faith was founded, and it was this that became the text of his message to the world. As he said himself, 'So penetrated are our minds by Him that our philosophies end in an attempt to read His meaning. So does He fill the space between man and God that our theologies begin with Him, end with Him, read God and the Universe all through Him.' Then comes the great saying of Augustine, 'Da quod jubes et jube quod vis,' speaking as it does of submission to the will of God and ready obedience to His commands. The sense of duty was dominant in Dr. Fairbairn's life, and equally marked was his feeling of dependence on the Divine. He worked 'as ever in the great Taskmaster's eye.' So once more, 'In lumine Tuo videbimus lumen.' This is our hope and faith, as it was his. However thick the cloud and darkness round about us here, 'he never doubted clouds would break,' nor need we doubt. He has passed from darkness into light, and in that light we leave him. We do not meet here as those who sorrow without hope, but rather as those whose sorrow is turned into joy. We have to thank God with all our hearts for a great and good man who lived his life well and faithfully, and who is now entered into his rest."

At the next meeting of the College Council after Fairbairn's death various steps were taken to perpetuate his memory. A Fairbairn Essay prize was established to

encourage the study of those subjects in which he was himself chiefly interested, also a Fairbairn Scholarship which should be open to members of all the Free Churches —this in fulfilment of his often-expressed desire. At Mansfield House, in Canning Town, a Fairbairn Studentship was founded to enable a student who had finished his course at the college to spend a year at the Settlement, and so gain practical experience in social service. In addition to these his old pupils combined to set up a memorial bronze tablet, which was placed at the back of the seat he used to occupy in the college chapel. It bears the following inscription :

A.M.D.G.

ANDREÆ MARTINO FAIRBAIRN
D.D., LL.D., LITT.D.

Per Annos XXIII.
Huius Collegii Præsidi primo
1886–1909
Magistro optime merito
Grati posuerunt
Discipuli.

This tablet was dedicated at a special service held in connection with the annual meetings of the college on June 13, 1913. The speaker was the Rev. C. Silvester Horne, one of the earliest and most brilliant of Fairbairn's Oxford pupils, himself destined to be carried off but a year later by a most untimely death. Among the many tributes which were paid to Fairbairn his was recognised on all hands to be at once most intimate and most just. It may fitly be given here as summing up the impression which this book is intended to convey.

" We are unveiling to-day a memorial tablet by which, in grateful and loving terms, we set on record the regard

in which Dr. Fairbairn's pupils and disciples held their master. Many tributes have been paid to him by representatives of many schools in many lands. But, like the disciples of Browning's Grammarian, who exalted his fame by giving him burial on the highest peak, we in this place believe that our late beloved Principal was 'far loftier than the world suspects.' We sustained a relationship to him into which it was not given to others to enter. It would not be easy to exaggerate the effect which he produced upon Oxford when in the prime of his powers he took the University by storm twenty-seven years ago. We shared to the full the pride and delight in his public prowess, and the exercise of his extraordinary gifts; even as we devoured with enthusiasm his many contributions to current literature. We were fully alive to the privilege and distinction of being trained under the first theological thinker of his generation, and we exulted in every new wreath that was awarded him by his contemporaries and peers. But withal there was the something more which was the essence of our relationship to him—which gave uniqueness to our joy—that which has inspired the memorial which we unveil this day. He was to us so much more than the famous scholar, the learned divine, the constructive theologian, the acute controversialist. There was no gain like ours from his life; there was no loss like ours from his death. In a very real sense we were his 'sons' in the faith. We knew well how largely any endowments we possessed for our ministry were due to him. He laced our harness and edged our sword. He steadied us in hours of mental disquietude, and delivered us from many fears and illusions. Only those who know what strength his wisdom and love conferred upon our spear and bow when we ventured forth into the unknown field can understand the cry of our hearts when we knew that he had passed away, 'My father, my father, the chariots of Israel and the horsemen thereof!'

"Admiration is easily expressed; but the language of affection is always difficult; and even the semi-publicity of this gathering makes it almost impossible. I am trying to put into simple words the love of men who felt that in large part it was to Dr. Fairbairn that

they owed their souls. The wealth of the estate of freedom and of truth with which he endowed us it is not possible for us to exaggerate. He made himself a part of all we were. I speak as one who for four-and-twenty years has been conscious that something of Dr. Fairbairn's personality and teaching has entered into every sermon I have ever preached, and every view I have tried to take of truth and duty. It might have been supposed that his extraordinary intellectual gifts and his massive learning would of themselves disqualify him from winning the affection of raw students such as we were—we who never felt the shallowness of our own knowledge and experience more than when we came into contact with him. But his sympathies, his humanities, his ever eager interest in young life seeking truth and faith bridged every gulf and gave him the victory over our hearts, and are the secret of the loving pride with which we write ourselves down as his 'men.'

"Moreover, as we are venturing to-day to tread holy ground, let me try to speak of the impression which steadily grew upon us of Dr. Fairbairn as a man of God. Let others do homage to the splendour of the reasoning powers which he dedicated to the defence and interpretation of the Faith and of the Church. But that was not the real strength of his genius. In combination with it was the vision of the Mystic. I always felt that he did not try to rationalise our ultimate mysteries. He was so reverent in the presence of the supreme revelation. Unless there had been that about him, he could not have exercised the spiritual leadership he did. Mere encyclopædic knowledge of what other men have thought and taught about God might have won him a reputation as a scholar, but not as a seer, still less as a saint. That comes only from the first-hand knowledge of God; and the memories some of us cherish most of Dr. Fairbairn are not even of those brilliant and notable addresses in which he revealed his astonishing erudition, and incomparable skill in apologetics, but quiet intimate talks when we were privileged to be admitted to the sanctuary of his inmost experience and belief. All this was perfectly consistent with those other hours when he readily disembarrassed himself of all serious interests,

and entered into our enthusiasm for games, or himself took the lead in festive and even frivolous conversation. I am speaking of the years when his powers were at their prime, and when every day brought some surprising revelation of his qualities; every day something that endeared him to us the more, and woke grateful thoughts of our privilege.

"I hope that in speaking thus I am not even seeming to disparage his accomplishments as a great scholar and theologian. Only that was his obvious title to fame; and as such was seized upon by the world, and much laboured in the public press. We could not forget it if we would. We smile now as we recall our baffled endeavour to find something that he did not know. He has always seemed to me the one man to whom his beloved Milton's theory of education was not altogether grotesque, and who could, or probably did, learn a language or two in some pleasant interlude of rest from more serious studies. His biographer will probably find it to be one of his tasks to bring to light some of those acquirements of which Dr. Fairbairn never spoke, but which, with true scholarly modesty, he concealed from everybody, unless and until some unexpected event betrayed them. From time to time we were overwhelmed by the realisation of what his industry and memory were, when all that lay behind his native simplicity dawned upon us. How could we ever forget the impression produced on us by his marvellous erudition! With his pride in Puritan scholarship and literature, and in the educational traditions of his native land he held up before us, as we remember, an austere standard of work and study. No one believed more in real mental discipline. But somehow no one was ever less tempted to mistake the end of life or to lead us to suppose that if we understood all mysteries and all knowledge, we might be something, even without the Christian character. It was thus we knew him and loved him as the most human of scholars and masters. It may be true at times, as we are told, that 'Never dared the man put off the prophet,' but in the case of Dr. Fairbairn the prophet never put off the man. Of the breadth of his sympathies I might say much. He cared for men and women everywhere, in the obscure village and industrial

centre. He knew the virtue and value of the peasant stock; and he made us kindle to his own unfeigned love of the people. All these are weak words. To those of us who knew him in his greatest and most prophetic moments all words are poor and futile. It all comes back to us to-day. The passion of his love of freedom; the glow of imagination with which he pictured the mighty dead in whose great succession he stood—how he communicated this enthusiasm to us; how large a part it seems to us to-day of all we received in this place.

"One of his last acts in the college was to choose the saints and heroes who were to be the subjects of these windows. To-day we write his name for ever in the chapel that he loved so well. His name is not unworthy to stand with the holiest of those whose portraits adorn this house. To us who knew him this college is memorial enough; but we pray that to all future generations this simple memorial may make known the honour and the love in which we held him, and our gratitude to God for His great gift to us and to the whole Church of Christ in the first Principal of Mansfield College."

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